

# Studies in Intelligence

Vol. 63, No. 1 (March 2019) UNCLASSIFIED

Journal of the American Intelligence Professional

## Intelligence and the Nuclear Proliferation Challenge

An Amateur Spy Ring in Occupied WWII Indochina

The Evolution of Kenya's Intelligence Services

### Book Reviews

Secret Operations of World War II

The Spy and the Traitor

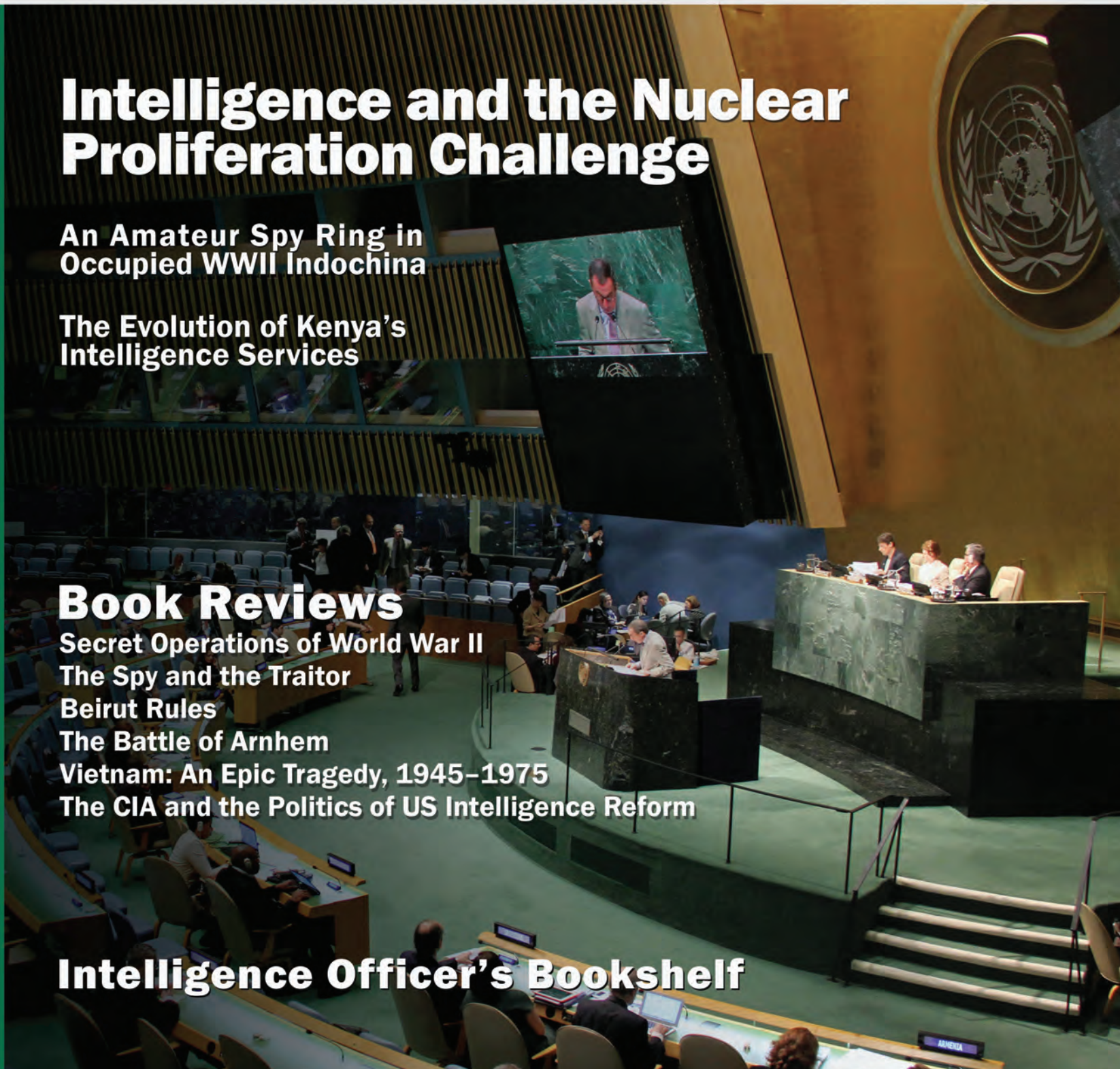
Beirut Rules

The Battle of Arnhem

Vietnam: An Epic Tragedy, 1945–1975

The CIA and the Politics of US Intelligence Reform

### Intelligence Officer's Bookshelf



---

This publication is prepared primarily for the use of US government officials. The format, coverage, and content are designed to meet their requirements. To that end, complete issues of *Studies in Intelligence* may remain classified and are not circulated to the public. These printed unclassified extracts from a classified issue are provided as a courtesy to subscribers with professional or academic interest in the field of intelligence.

All statements of fact, opinion, or analysis expressed in *Studies in Intelligence* are those of the authors. They do not necessarily reflect official positions or views of the Central Intelligence Agency or any other US government entity, past or present. Nothing in the contents should be construed as asserting or implying US government endorsement of an article's factual statements and interpretations.

*Studies in Intelligence* often contains material created by individuals other than US government employees and, accordingly, such works are appropriately attributed and protected by United States copyright law. Such items should not be reproduced or disseminated without the express permission of the copyright holder. Any potential liability associated with the unauthorized use of copyrighted material from *Studies in Intelligence* rests with the third party infringer.

*Studies in Intelligence* is available on the Internet at: [https:// www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/ index.html](https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/index.html).

Requests for subscriptions should be sent to:

Center for the Study of Intelligence  
Central Intelligence Agency  
Washington, DC 20505

ISSN 1527-0874

---

Cover: A view of a session of the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treat on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which took place at United Nations Headquarters in New York City. The conference lasted nearly a month. Photo © Shi Xiaomeng/Xinhua/Alamy Live News.

---

**Mission**

The mission of *Studies in Intelligence* is to stimulate within the Intelligence Community the constructive discussion of important issues of the day, to expand knowledge of lessons learned from past experiences, to increase understanding of the history of the profession, and to provide readers with considered reviews of public media concerning intelligence.

The journal is administered by the Center for the Study of Intelligence, which includes the CIA's History Staff, CIA's Lessons Learned Program, and the CIA Museum. CSI also provides the curator of the CIA's Historical Intelligence Collection of Literature. In addition, it houses the Emerging Trends Program, which seeks to identify the impact of future trends on the work of US intelligence.

---

**Contributions**

*Studies in Intelligence* welcomes articles, book reviews, and other communications. Hardcopy material or data discs (preferably in .doc or .rtf formats) may be mailed to:

Editor  
Studies in Intelligence  
Center for the Study of Intelligence  
Central Intelligence Agency  
Washington, DC 20505

---

**Awards**

The Sherman Kent Award of \$3,500 is offered annually for the most significant contribution to the literature of intelligence submitted for publication in *Studies*. The prize may be divided if two or more articles are judged to be of equal merit, or it may be withheld if no article is deemed sufficiently outstanding. An additional amount is available for other prizes.

Another monetary award is given in the name of Walter L. Pforzheimer to the graduate or undergraduate student who has written the best article on an intelligence-related subject.

Unless otherwise announced from year to year, articles on any subject within the range of *Studies*' purview, as defined in its masthead, will be considered for the awards. They will be judged primarily on substantive originality and soundness, secondarily on literary qualities. Members of the Studies Editorial Board are excluded from the competition.

The Editorial Board welcomes readers' nominations for awards.

---





CENTER for the STUDY of INTELLIGENCE

Washington, DC 20505

## EDITORIAL POLICY

Articles for *Studies in Intelligence* may be written on any historical, operational, doctrinal, or theoretical aspect of intelligence.

The final responsibility for accepting or rejecting an article rests with the Editorial Board.

The criterion for publication is whether, in the opinion of the board, the article makes a contribution to the literature of intelligence.

## EDITORIAL BOARD

Peter Usowski (Chairman)  
John Bennett  
William Caniano  
Dawn Eilenberger  
Steven Galpern  
Catherine S. Higgins  
Gary Keeley  
Stephen O. Maddalena  
Jason Manosevitz  
Terrence Markin  
John McLaughlin  
Fran Moore  
LTG Theodore Nicholas (USA, Ret.)  
Ricardo P.  
Cindy Webb

Members are all active or former Intelligence Community officers. One member is not listed.

## EDITORS

Andres Vaart (Managing Editor)  
Rebecca L. Fisher

# Studies in Intelligence

Vol. 63, No. 1 (Extracts, March 2019)

## Contents

### Intelligence Today and Tomorrow

- The Nuclear Proliferation Challenge*  
**Improving the Role of Intelligence in Counterproliferation Policymaking** 1  
Henry Sokolski

### Historical Perspectives

- The Gordon-Bernard-Tan Group*  
**Three Amateur Spies and the Intelligence Organization They Created in Occupied WWII Indochina** 9  
Bob Bergin

- Intelligence in East Africa*  
**Following in Footsteps: The Transformation of Kenya's Intelligence Services Since the Colonial Era** 23  
Ryan Shaffer

### Intelligence in Public Media

- Secret Operations of World War II** 41  
Reviewed by David A. Foy

- The Spy and the Traitor: The Greatest Espionage Story of the Cold War* 45  
Reviewed by David A. Foy

- Beirut Rules: The Murder of a CIA Station Chief and Hezbollah's War Against America* 49  
Reviewed by Brent G.

- The Battle of Arnhem: The Deadliest Airborne Operation of World War II* 51  
Reviewed by Leslie C.

- Vietnam: An Epic Tragedy, 1945–1975* 53  
Reviewed by Leslie C.

- The CIA and the Politics of US Intelligence Reform* 57  
Reviewed by Michael Yerushalmi

- Intelligence Officer's Bookshelf** 59  
Compiled and reviewed by Hayden Peake





# Contributors

**Bob Bergin** is a former Foreign Service officer and frequent contributor. He researches and writes about Asian and aircraft history.

**Leslie C.** is a career CIA Directorate of Operations officer who has an interest in intelligence history.

**David A. Foy** is the Intelligence Community historian on the History Staff of the Center for the Study of Intelligence. He is a frequent contributor of book reviews.

**Brent G.** is a historian in CSI's History Staff.

**Hayden Peake** has served in the CIA's Directorates of Operations and Science and Technology. He has been compiling and writing reviews for the "Intelligence Officer's Bookshelf" since December 2002.

**Ryan Shaffer** is a writer and historian. His academic work explores Asian, African, and European history.

**Henry Sokolski** is the Executive Director of the Nonproliferation Policy Education Center. ([www.npolicy.org](http://www.npolicy.org)). He served as deputy for nonproliferation policy under Secretary of Defense Richard Cheney and is author of *Underestimated: Our Not So Peaceful Nuclear Future* (2019, second edition).

**Michael Yerushalmi** is a Department of Defense analyst with interest in Middle East and intelligence history.



## 2018 Studies in Intelligence Annual Awards

On 19 February 2019 CIA Deputy Director Vaughn Bishop presented awards to the authors of particularly notable contributions to the journal during 2018. The following unclassified articles and their authors were recognized:

"Military Intelligence in the Campaign for Palestine, 1917," by James G. Noone (*Studies* 62, no. 1 (March 2018))

"'A Road Not Taken': But a Road to Where?" by Thomas L. Ahern [*Studies* 62, no. 2 (June 2018)]

Walter Pforzheimer Student Essay Award: "Union Naval Intelligence in the American Civil War: Moving Toward a Global Intelligence System," by Matthew E. Skros (*Studies* 62, no 4 [December 2018])

Review of *The Exile: The Stunning Story of Osama Bin Laden and Al Qaeda in Flight* by Randy Burkett (*Studies* 62, no. 2 [June 2018])

Reviews of *The Future is History* and *The Long Hangover* by John Ehrman (*Studies* 62, no. 2 [June 2018])







## **Improving the Role of Intelligence in Counterproliferation Policymaking: Report of the “Speaking Truth to Nonproliferation Project,” 2018**

*Henry Sokolski*

---

***The purpose of the case studies was to identify when and how intelligence shaped or prompted nonproliferation policy actions and, if it did not, why.***

This report is the culmination of a two-year project sponsored by the Nonproliferation Policy Education Center,<sup>a</sup> which engaged more than 50 senior, retired and serving policymakers, intelligence officers, and top academic national security analysts. Its findings are based on hours of group discussions and private conversations that helped develop new primary histories of eight nuclear proliferation cases: India, Pakistan, Israel, Taiwan, South Korea, Libya, and an Argentine and a separate South African nuclear rocket case.<sup>b</sup>

Each history was prepared by an academic historian and was based on open sources. Former officials who had direct roles in these cases then critiqued these accounts. Additional private interviews were conducted with participants to fill in historical gaps. The purpose of the case studies was to identify when and how intelligence shaped or prompted nonproliferation policy actions and,

if it did not, why. This set of historical conclusions prompted a more general discussion of how policy and intelligence officials might improve their collaboration to prevent and curb further nuclear proliferation and how academics might contribute by enhancing their treatment of such issues.

The project addressed three broad, related questions:

- How can the role of intelligence in the making of nonproliferation policy be improved?
- How can the nonproliferation agenda get the priority it deserves?
- How can the nonproliferation community be sustained and strengthened?

---

a. The Nonproliferation Policy Education Center (NPEC), a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, is a nonpartisan, nonprofit, educational organization founded in 1994 to promote a better understanding of strategic weapons proliferation issues. NPEC educates policymakers, journalists, and university professors about proliferation threats and possible new policies and measures to meet them.

b. The Libya case study, done by William Tobey of the Harvard Belfer Center for Science and Technology, appeared in *Studies in Intelligence* 61, no. 4 (December 2017). A version of the Israeli case study appeared in the *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 42, no. 1 (March 2018). The remaining case studies are undergoing security review.

---

The views, opinions, and findings of the author expressed in this article should not be construed as asserting or implying US government endorsement of its factual statements and interpretations or representing the official positions of any component of the United States government. © Henry Sokolski, 2019.

---

---

**... when effective nuclear nonproliferation policy actions are absent, it is rarely due to a lack of timely intelligence.**

---

### ***Improving the Role of Intelligence in Policymaking***

The first step in answering this question is to identify shortcomings in the nonproliferation intelligence process. One of the major findings of this study is that when effective nuclear nonproliferation policy actions are absent, it is rarely due to a lack of timely intelligence. A key reason actions are not taken is that the relationship between intelligence and policy is not simple, automatic or linear. Conventional wisdom has it that “actionable” intelligence is the critical ingredient most lacking and most needed to enable sound, timely nonproliferation action. In fact, the cases this project examined suggest otherwise.

*At least as often as not, even when timely, repeated, and persuasive intelligence on nuclear proliferation was available, policymakers deflected, ignored, or downplayed it in favor of pursuing what they viewed as more urgent political, military, economic, or diplomatic objectives.* This was most evident in the Israel case where the Intelligence Community IC had considerable evidence

- that Israelis had stolen 100 to 300 pounds of weapons-grade uranium from a nuclear facility in Pennsylvania;
- that Israel had tested a nuclear device in violation of the Limited

Nuclear Threshold Test Ban Treaty, which Israel had signed; and

- that Israel had repeatedly deceived US nuclear inspectors.

Pakistan’s nuclear weapons progress was also well understood by US intelligence, yet, again, US policymakers were reluctant to act. The problem in these cases was not inadequate intelligence but the existence of other policy priorities that made policymakers reluctant or unwilling to act decisively against proliferation.

*When policymakers were unwilling to act in the face of persuasive intelligence that a nuclear proliferation concern existed, the IC was reticent to push the policy community to act.* There are understandable reasons for this. The IC wishes to preserve its independence from the policy process. It also is appropriately concerned about preserving its sources of intelligence and amassing more information, whereas policymakers are more inclined to use and share intelligence selectively to achieve specific policy goals, or to avoid upsetting policy goals. Again, the historical case of Pakistan is relevant. In this case, the Intelligence Community’s preservation of its sources regarding A. Q. Khan certainly complicated early public discussion of this case.

Ideally, there is a natural give and take in discussions of when to use perishable intelligence that would benefit from close intelligence and

policy interaction and understanding of each other’s concerns and priorities but in practice there is tension between the two communities about the protection and uses of intelligence. The IC’s diffidence in advocating forcefully on behalf of the facts makes it easier for policymakers to ignore or override evidence when there are reasons to do so—the IC rarely plays an effective corrective role.<sup>a</sup>

*In some cases, such as North Korea, Israel, India, and Pakistan (once their nuclear weapons programs were fully underway), policymakers concluded, rightly or wrongly, that they did not have any strong policy levers with which to block these nuclear weapons efforts.* In these cases, it was not a lack of good intelligence that inhibited action, but the policymakers conclusion that no attractive action was possible.

Thus, the historical record suggests that inadequate intelligence is not the principal cause of ineffective nonproliferation policies. Rather, when policymakers pursue other priorities that they value more highly or when they believe they possess no good policy options, persuasive intelligence will not prompt vigorous nonproliferation actions. If the policymaker does not believe taking clear, short-term risks is warranted to avoid larger, long-term risks, inaction is most likely. The reticence of the IC to push the policymaker to act or to clarify the long-term risks facilitates such outcomes.

---

a. The IC, of course, is far from infallible. It has missed a number of important tactical developments, such as the early phases of the construction of a North Korean-designed plutonium producing reactor in Syria and South Africa’s preparation of a nuclear test site in 1977. A bigger problem, addressed in this report, is that the IC does not routinely consider what the most likely bad nuclear proliferation futures over the next decade or two might be and what factors and steps could lead to more positive futures.

The historical cases examined in this project also cast some light on when intelligence does cause policymakers to act decisively. A key factor is the wider political context within which a case is unfolding. In the case of South Korea in the 1970s, the State Department was still embarrassed by Congress's discovery that, despite State's denial, US heavy water had been used by India to make its first bomb in 1974. This revelation led, over State's objections, to the passage of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Act of 1978.

With the new law in force, the executive branch didn't want to get caught flat-footed again. When evidence emerged in the late 1970s of South Korea's intent to make its own nuclear weapons, the White House acted on the intelligence almost immediately and pressured South Korea to abandon the project. In the case of Taiwan, President Nixon's recognition of the Peoples' Republic of China and the passage of the Taiwan Relations Act made Washington policymakers particularly sensitive to any indication Taiwan might go nuclear. Again, the White House acted early, upon the very first indications, and with good results.

In the case of Libya and the South African and Argentine nuclear-capable rocket cases, which this project examined, several factors disposed policymakers to act. These included the failure to prevent Iraq's acquisition of rocket technology, congressional hearings and passage of the Missile Technology Control Act, and the transition of the governments in Argentina and South Africa to popular self-rule. In the Argentine and South African rocket cases, moreover, there were long-term trade and

---

***The instruction and training of intelligence and policy-making officials in the field of nuclear nonproliferation would benefit from an analysis of case histories.***

---

military assistance bans in place and several key US government departments acting in close operational cooperation with the IC. In contrast, more than once, intelligence relating to Israel's, Pakistan's, and North Korea's nuclear weapons-related activities was downplayed, deflected, or ignored by US policymakers as untimely, unconvincing, or unwanted, as the context and overriding policy concerns then were quite different from the South Korea, Taiwan, Libya, and rocket cases.

More and better intelligence is always desirable but the findings of this project suggest that the main deficiencies in the intelligence-nonproliferation nexus lie elsewhere. The fundamental problem has to do with how nonproliferation intelligence is used (or not used) by policymakers and that, in turn, raises issues about the relationship between the IC and policymaking and the need to focus on long-term threat assessments and policy planning.

***Operationally, these findings recommend a more conscious effort to increase collaboration between intelligence and policy making officials by:***

- *Reviewing intelligence tradecraft guidelines regarding how and when intelligence officers and policymakers should interact.*

The goal would be to identify worrisome proliferation trends at the earliest possible point and to formulate and execute practical counteractions. Government officials should be

encouraged to make judgments about a proliferation-related circumstance at a relatively inchoate stage so they can take modest, early actions—before it becomes “too hard” to act (i.e., when only radical, high-risk actions are feasible). This will require both the intelligence and policy communities to tolerate ambiguities, express uncertainties, and, when appropriate, to take modest risks. The costs of failure are high enough to encourage such early efforts.

- *Expanding long-term, operational nonproliferation collaboration and planning between the intelligence and policy making communities.*

Useful lessons can be learned about assessing and neutralizing proliferation from current ongoing efforts to interdict proliferation activities and to lengthen nuclear proliferation timelines. Could the activities of the Strategic Interdiction Group of the National Counterproliferation Center and other integrated targeting and joint policy-analyst and operator cells be scaled up to deal with the broad array of global proliferation concerns? Could this be done without squelching healthy, competing, different interpretations of the intelligence? What new analytical, collection, and operational tools would they need? Also, what can be learned from earlier, failed efforts at such integration, e.g., the Strategic Assessments Group that had existed in CIA's Directorate of Intelligence? These questions deserve serious answers.

- *Encouraging increased joint instruction of policymakers and intelligence officers.*

---

### ***The historical record suggests, however, that willingness to prevent nuclear proliferation and, therefore to take prudent early action, has rarely been very high.***

---

The instruction and training of intelligence and policymaking officials in the field of nuclear nonproliferation would benefit from an analysis of case histories; both those where intelligence was used effectively to encourage and shape nonproliferation policy actions and those where it was not so used. It would be useful to determine how current government-sponsored education and training might better inform both intelligence and policy making staffs in the subject matter. Ideally, joint training and education of intelligence and policymaking staff should occur at entry and mid-level so that relationships are built before crises unfold.

---

#### ***Gaining the Priority the Nonproliferation Agenda Deserves?***

The use of intelligence will not be improved so long as policymakers are inclined to sacrifice nonproliferation concerns to advance other priorities. If policymakers valued achieving nonproliferation more highly, they would be less likely to resist or ignore the implications of proliferation intelligence. The historical record

suggests, however, that willingness to prevent nuclear proliferation and, therefore to take prudent early action, has rarely been very high.<sup>a</sup>

#### ***A Declining Concern?***

One of the broad conclusions of this project is that the priority attached to nonproliferation has recently declined at a point when longterm planning and modest early actions would be most useful. During the 1950, 60s, 70s, 80s, and 90s, policymakers and the public feared the further spread of nuclear weapons to additional states far more than they do today. Policymakers also were much more willing to take risks to prevent such proliferation. They viewed acquisition of nuclear weapons by France, Israel, China, India, Pakistan, and North Korea, and the attempted acquisition of nuclear weapons by Iraq, with considerable apprehension.

More recently, though, these concerns appear to have relaxed. Novel, counterintuitive academic notions of nuclear stability—that more nuclear powers may be better, that nuclear proliferation has been inconsequen-

tial and its risks overblown—have enjoyed a certain following.<sup>b</sup> Most recently, President Trump ruminated that Japanese and South Korean nuclear proliferation might not just be inevitable, but beneficial and that America's interests might be best served by allowing or encouraging their acquisition of nuclear arms. The British Foreign minister Boris Johnson, meanwhile, has argued that peace in the Middle East and Gulf would be best served by letting Iran acquire nuclear weapons.

#### ***Policy Fatigue***

In addition, policy fatigue has set in for reasons that cannot be easily dismissed. Two to three decades ago, there were a number of worrisome nuclear proliferation cases—Pakistan, India, North Korea, Iraq, Iran, Libya. Now, with the fall of Qadhafi and Saddam, the acceptance of India and Pakistan's nuclear status, the only clear-cut cases of nuclear worry are Iran and North Korea. Unfortunately, their nuclear behavior cannot be easily managed. More important, for most news watchers, there do not seem now to be many other states on the cusp of acquiring nuclear arms. Egypt, Turkey, Algeria, and the United Arab Emirates are uncertain cases that, at best, seem years away from

---

a. Among the examples of nonproliferation actions taken at an early stage are President John F. Kennedy's efforts to block Israel's nuclear weapons program, the Ford administration's announcement of a policy of deferring commercial plutonium activities; early and persistent US efforts to block Libyan weapons of mass destruction programs; efforts to kill the Condor rocket program in the 1980s; initiatives to block Pakistani, South Korean, and Brazilian acquisition reprocessing technology in the 1970s and to block Taiwan's and South Korea's covert weapons efforts in the 1970s and 1980s. Israel and Pakistan, though, went on to get a bomb. More recently, Iraq's, Iran's, India, Syria's and North Korea's programs also were allowed to progress to points that subsequently required costly, lengthy military, covert or diplomatic actions. The concern of this report is that taking the latter approach of delayed, costly actions may become more common and much more costly.

b. See, e.g., Maggie Haberman and David E. Sanger, "Transcript: Donald Trump Expounds on His Foreign Policy Views," the *New York Times*, March 26, 2016, available at [http://www.nytimes.com/2016/03/27/us/politics/donald-trump-transcript.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2016/03/27/us/politics/donald-trump-transcript.html?_r=0); and Anderson Cooper, "Townhall in Milwaukee with Donald Trump- Transcript," CNN, March 29, 2016, available at <http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/160329/acd.02.htm> and Boris Johnson, "Give Iran the Bomb: It Might Make the Regime more Pliable," *The Telegraph*, October 12, 2006, available at <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/comment/personal-view/3633097/Give-Iran-the-bomb-it-might-make-the-regime-more-pliable.html>.

getting nuclear arms (unless they change course and engage in crash programs that would be difficult to hide). Saudi Arabia might get bombs from Pakistan, but most pundits discount this possibility as an immediate worry. As for Japan and South Korea, they both may have the way but still seem distant from exercising the will to acquire their own nuclear weapons, unless their faith in US security guarantees dramatically falters.

### **Emerging Proliferation Worries**

Are there, then, no nuclear proliferation problems worth working? Actually, just the opposite. The proliferation problems we face and can most readily address, however, are not so much (as it was in the past) specific trouble states, but emerging trends, which if not slowed or blocked will produce a bow wave of future nuclear-armed states and possible use within five to 15 years. Among the trends this project identified were:

*The growing interest in Pakistan and Russia, and possibly in China and India as well, in the early use of nuclear arms against a variety of conventional threats.* Russia and Pakistan both contend that a single or a few nuclear weapons can and should be used as a firebreak against a variety of conventional military attacks. If China and India should adopt similar views, the need to acquire not just hundreds, but possibly thousands of new, additional warheads would push new production and prompt possible emulation globally.

*An increasing number of new scenarios for actual or threatened nuclear use by Russia, China, India, Pakistan, North Korea, and Israel.*

*The likelihood that if the next use of nuclear weapons is seen as*

---

***No success against nuclear proliferation, however, is likely, or even possible, unless government officials are willing and able to identify futures that have clear proper nouns; outcomes they wish to avoid; and happy endings they prefer to secure and against which they can plan.***

---

*having militarily benefited the first user, many other countries might want nuclear weapons and be willing to use them first even if this risked major nuclear exchanges that would be disastrous.*

*The possible ramp up and stockpiling of fissile materials production in China, Japan, and South Korea that could enable these states to break out with large numbers of nuclear weapons.*

*The possible emulation of Iran's enrichment efforts by other states once Iran is clear of the restrictions of the Iran nuclear deal.*

*The possible emulation of Brazil's naval reactor and enrichment program by South Korea, Iran, Pakistan and others.*

*The increasing dissemination of nuclear weapons design and production-related technologies, including both new (3-D printing and CAD CAM production techniques) and old (weapons code and design information).*

None of these trends has caught the immediate attention of the public or much of the US government.

Reflecting this lack of urgency, congressional oversight is much reduced from what it once was. The Senate has disbanded the Governmental Affairs Subcommittee on Nuclear Proliferation, which had been an important watchdog in the area. Nor are there any longer annual IC or

routine congressional staff reports on nuclear proliferation developments.

What nuclear nonproliferation oversight there is is far less focused on identifying and slowing worrisome longterm trends than on reacting to all too advanced nuclear proliferation crises, for example:

- What to do about North Korea's latest nuclear or nuclear-capable missile tests;
- How best to constrain Iran's nuclear and long-range missile programs;
- How to get Syria to honor its International Atomic Energy Agency inspection obligations after Israel bombed a suspect production reactor, etc.

All of this is symptomatic of policy fatigue as well as a growing disinclination to plan. No success against nuclear proliferation, however, is likely, or even possible, unless government officials are willing and able to identify futures that have clear proper nouns; outcomes they wish to avoid; and happy endings they prefer to secure and against which they can plan. Each of these specific futures should be seen as master narratives guiding US policy. As a negative but immediately accessible point of departure, these narratives might begin with the notion that we should, at a minimum, avoid future Irans, Iraqs, Syrias, and North Koreas. The narratives should also tackle identifying

---

***If a key to more effective use of intelligence is the elevation of nonproliferation on the policy agenda so that it competes more successfully against other priorities, then it is essential to have a robust and well trained nonproliferation community.***

---

worrisome long-term proliferation trends and how best to stem them.

***Operationally, this suggests the need to:***

- *Develop a consensus on the nonproliferation futures the United States desires and nuclear proliferation futures we wish to avoid in the development of key US policy and intelligence requirements.*

The starting point here should be to call for a clearer description of these security futures in US Defense Department review and guidance efforts. These futures narratives should, in turn, drive more of the IC's development of its National Intelligence Priorities and a structured, routine liaison with mid- and senior-level policymakers. This effort should be more normative in character, aimed at identifying where Washington wants to get to rather than merely passive analysis. The fruits of and progress in institutionalizing this collaboration (perhaps in the National Counterproliferation Center, a revitalized Strategic Assessment Group, or similar body) should, in turn, be a topic for congressional oversight by the intelligence, foreign affairs, military and nuclear proliferation-related committees.

- *Revitalize Congressional oversight.*

The Senate Governmental Affairs Committee might reestablish its Subcommittee on Energy and Nuclear Proliferation. Unlike the House, which has a subcommittee

of the Foreign Affairs Committee dedicated in part to strategic weapons proliferation concerns, there is no Senate committee of any sort dedicated to overseeing the management of US nonproliferation efforts. These dedicated "proliferation" committees should seek to hold joint hearings with the relevant intelligence and armed services committees to clarify the executive branch's own views of what proliferation threats deserve the most attention, why and how. Special attention should be paid not just to specific countries and crises, but to troubling longterm trends, such as growing interest in "peaceful" production and stockpiling of nuclear explosive plutonium and the build-up of enrichment capacity in trouble regions like East Asia and negative trends in foreign countries' nuclear weapons use doctrines. Congress also should request and receive routine classified briefs from the executive and produce routine assessments of their own. These, in fact, are required by law.

- *Ask each new administration to report publicly what the security risks of further nuclear proliferation in relation to possible use might be and how nuclear use by others might jeopardize the interests of the United States, international security, and the average American citizen.*
- *Game the most worrisome nuclear proliferation and nuclear weapon use scenarios to expand the consciousness of senior policymakers*

*and intelligence officers at the start of any new administration.*

This was done at the most senior levels at the start of the Reagan administration with useful results. Congress, which has a continuity of government responsibility if wars eliminate much of our country's executive branch, has a particular responsibility to understand how likely such wars might be and how they might best be avoided. Gaming of such crises for both senior executive officials and congressional members needs to be encouraged again.

---

### ***Sustaining and Strengthening the Nonproliferation Community***

If a key to more effective use of intelligence is the elevation of nonproliferation on the policy agenda so that it competes more successfully against other priorities, then it is essential to have a robust and well trained nonproliferation community able to make the case for the nonproliferation cause. In order to ensure that the requisite expertise is sustained, it is essential that new generations of nonproliferation experts are recruited and are well trained. It is not clear from the deliberations of this project that this essential task is being undertaken. On the contrary, it appears that efforts to expand academic instruction and analysis of nuclear proliferation cases have yet to significantly improve US nonproliferation policy and students' preparation for possible public service.

The problem is that the cultures and norms of academia diverge from policy needs, and it is difficult for academics to step outside of the

mold. Certainly, the demands of peer review placed on academics are difficult to overestimate, especially for political science and the study of public policy. These fields place a premium on the development of novel and general conceptual frameworks. Development of such frameworks is imperative to secure academic prominence, but they leave government actors mystified.

Similarly, political science scholarship prizes “proven” sources of information—primary documents and citations from prestigious published works. This reduces the incentive to develop new sources or to examine the existing sources critically. Whenever possible, general statistical treatment of aggregate data is also encouraged (although significant nuclear proliferation issues tend not to produce large aggregates). All of this is done in the name of promoting a more “scientific” approach to political analysis.

In the profession’s zeal to be more scientific, there has been a not-so-subtle deemphasis of narratives or political stories—the lifeblood of political discourse, insight, and instruction. First-hand accounts from prime actors often get downplayed or passed by political scientists as being merely “anecdotal.” Academics tend to place more confidence in citations from newspapers, journals, and especially articles by other academics. This preference, of course, easily leads academics to rely only on what they believe to be “safe” sources, which further limits the scope of their investigation of the real-life political world.

---

***Academics have yet to fully exploit some of the richest and most powerful sources informing public policy—the narratives of those who have acted in the very cases of greatest interest. This undermines the quality and power of the analysis political scientists can tap.***

---

As a result, academics have yet to fully exploit some of the richest and most powerful sources informing public policy—the narratives of those who have acted in the very cases of greatest interest. This undermines the quality and power of the analysis political scientists can tap. Graham Allison’s classic work, *The Essence of Decision*, became powerful political science in no small part because of his willingness to speak through narratives on the Cuban missile crisis, narratives that were fresh and new at the time. As was noted by the former editor of the prestigious journal *International Security* at one of the project plenary meetings, there is a clear need now for more, not less oral history, as more and more documents relating to nuclear policy are declassified. These documents can only be made meaningful by interviewing those involved in their development or implementation.

Deemphasizing political narratives also affects the character of policy instruction. Thus, education in the field of nuclear proliferation has become increasingly stylized with a heavy emphasis on novel theories and concepts to explain, for example, why nations proliferate and the extent to which proliferation exerts a “stabilizing effect.” But it is less focused on how best to prevent nuclear proliferation and what has or has not worked and why. The latter, it goes

without saying, is essential practical preparation for public service.

Joint Professional Military Education (JPME) may be a key source of demand or at least receptivity for academic programs (a) for expanded strategic thinking about proliferation and (b) for mixing heterogeneous audiences of academics and operators.<sup>a</sup> JPME emphasizes “not what to think but how to think,” and critical thinking. Therefore, JPME, especially at the most senior military service schools, is nominally open to issues (such as nuclear proliferation) of the highest importance to grand strategy and that have been out of fashion since the end of the Cold War and the rise of global terrorism as the leading threat. Unfortunately, today, the challenges that nuclear proliferation could pose to US national security interests and that of its allies over the next five to 15 years and what might be done to cope or reverse these threats has yet to be a featured, prominent topic. This is a mistake.

***How can nonproliferation training be improved and made more relevant? The experience of this project suggests several steps:***

- *Bring more of “town” to “gown” by encouraging visits to academic centers from retired intelligence and policy making officials who can talk in the first-person about cases iden-*

---

a. For more on Joint Professional Military Education, see Chairman of the Joints Chiefs of Staff Instruction, “Officer Professional Military Education Policy,” May 29, 2015, available at [http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/education/officer\\_JPME/cjcsi1800\\_01e.pdf](http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/education/officer_JPME/cjcsi1800_01e.pdf).



---

### **More also needs to be done to reform the existing security system, which increasingly is a barrier both to students wishing to enter public service and to understanding of the past.**

---

*tified with proper nouns (e.g., Israel, Pakistan, North Korea, etc.).*

Their “war stories” may not be the complete analysis but can vividly expose the student and professor to the power of various narratives, thereby enriching the resources from which both can ponder how sound existing policy conceptual frameworks might be. These stories also can help determine how more amendable nuclear proliferation problems might be to policy action more generally.

Departing senior and mid-level officials should be encouraged by their agencies to share which two or three cases they were most involved with and to keep a tally on which departing official is most conversant about which case and making use of this information in securing oral histories both classified and unclassified.

- *Increase the number of year-long internships for promising graduate students and faculty in policy making, legislative and intelligence staff positions to familiarize the student and teacher with line-staff operations in preventing nuclear proliferation.*

Additionally fellowships for graduate students (including students with all but dissertation status) interested in public service (rather than teaching) should be sponsored by nongovernmental organizations to help them find full-time work on Capitol Hill and support them in such posts for the first year.

More also needs to be done to reform the existing security system, which increasingly is a barrier both to students wishing to enter public service and to understanding of the past.<sup>a</sup>

- *Create military/civilian mixed seminars, conferences and briefings, contributions to individual classes, development of full two to three week courses, and summer institutes when senior military service and intelligence schools focus on longterm national security problems that should include nuclear proliferation.*

The National Defense University currently works with some 600 O-5 and O-6 military officers, almost one fifth of whom are internationals. The goal of their instruction is to think broadly and outside their

comfort zone. The officers attend these schools because their service has marked them for advancement, and many of them are receptive to “charging their intellectual batteries” and figuring out what they want to do in their futures. It would be useful to present nuclear proliferation to them as a field of high national need and intellectual and operational challenge.

Yet another model worth emulating is the two-week summer seminars series on national security held at several campuses in the 1970s. Each summer the seminar enlisted promising new PhDs. In the past, this included students that later went on to become deputy secretary of defense, undersecretary of defense for policy, chairman of the National Intelligence Council, senior members of the National Security Council, directors of prestigious graduate school national security programs think tank scholars and senior industry officials. The National Defense University, the Naval War College, the Air War College, the Army War College, and the Naval Postgraduate School all could and should serve as venues for such educational efforts. Finally, the Sherman Kent School for Intelligence Analysis in CIA, the National Intelligence University, and the Center for the Study of Intelligence should be tapped to create similar educational opportunities.



---

**Henry Sokolski** is the Executive Director of the Nonproliferation Policy Education Center. He served as deputy for nonproliferation policy under Secretary of Defense Richard Cheney and is author of *Underestimated: Our Not So Peaceful Nuclear Future* (2019, second edition).

---

a. Despite recent legislation to reform the US security clearance system, the current system still presents crippling barriers to the timely authorization of interns and new hires for work in intelligence, defense, and foreign affairs within the US government. This same system also seriously inhibits the prospect for more out briefs from retired government officials and makes it difficult for those who are retired to renew their security clearance for advisory work after full time employment. Finally, this same security system makes declassification of even very old information needed for scholarship slow, cumbersome, inaccurate and, too often, unlikely.

## Three Amateur Spies and the Intelligence Organization They Created in Occupied WWII Indochina

Bob Bergin

---

***It was a Terry and the Pirates operation in a Terry and the Pirates world, and it was very effective in its time and place.***

### ***Introduction***

*The other group with which the OSS worked in Indo China was the Gordon-Bernard-Tan Group (GBT). It was organized in early 1942 by a group of employees of a U.S. oil firm in Indochina.*<sup>a,1</sup>

It was a *Terry and the Pirates* operation in a *Terry and the Pirates* world, and it was very effective in its time and place.<sup>2</sup> Arguably, it was the most successful Allied intelligence collection operation in World War II Asia.

When the Imperial Japanese Army invaded French Indochina in September 1940, all contact between the French colony and the Allied presence in neighboring China and elsewhere was cut off. The British, Chinese and Free French desperately needed intelligence on the Japanese occupiers, as did the Americans when they were drawn into the Asian war. But there was no intelligence coming out of Indochina, where the

practical difficulties of establishing intelligence mechanisms in a new environment were compounded by the complex political situation.

As explained by Tai Li, the intelligence and security chief of the Chinese Nationalists led by Chiang Kai-shek, “the Chinese “could do almost nothing as far as Indochina was concerned. . . . many different [Vietnamese] groups were active in one way or another, but the trouble was they did not like each other. On only one point, apparently, were they able to agree . . . none of them liked the Chinese.” As for the French in Indochina, “being French, they seemed to have almost as many different categories as people,” and all were “heartily disliked . . . for not having permitted the region enough liberty or political responsibility.”<sup>b3</sup>

While the Allied intelligence services grappled with the problem, three amateurs created a highly effec-

---

a. The first group OSS worked with in Indochina was the Meynier Group, composed of French officers with Indochina experience who at the request of OSS came from the Free French military authorities. They arrived in China in the fall of 1943. By early 1944, a lack of progress in their attempt to penetrate Indochina and overwhelming “intra-French political complexities” resulted in an OSS request that “the group be transferred to the full control and authority of the French Military Mission [FMM] in China.” (*OSS War Report*, Vol. II, 439.)

b. The names of Chinese people and places in this article are rendered according to the spellings used in contemporaneous accounts, which in many cases differ from current romanization.

---

The views, opinions, and findings of the author expressed in this article should not be construed as asserting or implying US government endorsement of its factual statements and interpretations or representing the official positions of any component of the United States government. © Bob Bergin, 2019.

---

---

**Unlike classic agent nets run by professional intelligence services, the GBT group was fiercely protective of its independence on the grounds that it was its independence that assured its effectiveness.**

---

tive intelligence collection mechanism that would become the chief source of intelligence on the Japanese and their activities in French Indochina.

*The original purpose of the leader of the group, a Canadian, appeared to have been to bolster the morale of the employee's French friends in the country by maintaining contact with the outside world. However, what had been a casual arrangement began to assume the characteristics of an amateur intelligence agency. Subsequently, it developed into an actual Intelligence network collaborating with Allied organizations.<sup>4</sup>*

Unlike classic agent nets run by professional intelligence services, the GBT group was fiercely protective of its independence on the grounds that it was its independence that assured its effectiveness. A look at the group's organization and how it operated offers an interesting contrast to the other Allied intelligence services then in China, particularly the US Office of Strategic Services (OSS). The GBT was small and free-wheeling; OSS was large and growing and experiencing the corrosive effects of a rapidly expanding bureaucracy. OSS leaders became intent on absorbing

the GBT group as the way to resolve their own knotty collection problems in Indochina.

OSS officer Archimedes Patti, reviewing the status of Allied intelligence in the Southeast Asia Command (SEAC) and the China Theater in 1944—before he became the chief of OSS Indochina operations in China—wrote in his 1980 memoir:

*The overlapping command structures, conflicting national objectives, inter-Allied and interagency jealousies, and interagency power struggles militated against effective operations and resulted in enormous waste of human effort and national funds.<sup>5</sup>*

---

### ***OSS Takes A Look at the GBT Group, September 1944***

*Although OSS at first had no direct relations with GBT, in September 1944 it provided some financial support and assigned a liaison officer to aid the development of SO [Special Operations] and MO [Morale Operations] and generally expand the GBT network.<sup>6</sup>*

OSS operations officer Charles Fenn sat in the office reserved for visiting brass at OSS headquarters in

Kunming, China, as the “new OSS overall boss, . . . a full West Point colonel named Coughlin,” served him “real Nescafe”<sup>a</sup> as he told Fenn of his new assignment: “We have a great new field for you to get busy on! It's with the Gordon Group<sup>b</sup> covering Indochina,” a top OSS priority.”<sup>7</sup>

Coughlin explained why this assignment was important: There was a lack of intelligence on the Japanese Imperial Army occupying Indochina. Although the Vichy French administration in Indochina was an ally of Japan now, Free French supporters inside Indochina provided some intelligence to the FFM in Kunming.<sup>c</sup> But their information was sent via courier. The lack of timeliness made it useless to the US Air Force for its bomber strikes on Japanese targets in Vietnam.

“But Gordon's got a couple of agents with transmitters,” Coughlin added. “We wanted to take over the whole operation for OSS . . . but he [Gordon] wouldn't buy it.” Gordon had always insisted that his group's success depended on its independence.<sup>d, 8</sup> In the end OSS agreed to back Gordon if he'd take an OSS officer into his group. “Well now, Fearless,” Coughlin said to Fenn, “Yours was the only name he'd agree to.”

“Fearless” was one of the appellations Fenn was known by. Another was “Troublesome Fenn.” Yet Fenn was competent and experienced and had previously done exception-

---

a. Still an innovation in China in 1944.

b. Usually known as GBT, it was informally also called “the Gordon Group.”

c. The FFM in Kunming was actually just the cover for Free French intelligence running Indochina operations. The only real FFM mission was in Chungking.

d. Especially from OSS, “whose methods Gordon considered autocratic.” (Fenn, *Ho Chi Minh: A Biographical Introduction* (Charles Scribner's Sons, 1973), 76.)

al work with Morale Operations, the OSS branch responsible for black propaganda and covert action operations. An independent-minded former journalist, he had broad East Asia experience and little patience with bureaucracy, in the OSS or elsewhere.

Fenn had had a single brief encounter with Gordon some weeks earlier. Fenn was then based at Kweilin, southeast of Kunming and near the Indochina border, organizing Chinese agent nets to work behind Japanese lines. He left Kweilin on the last DC-2 as Kweilin town and its major US airbase were being evacuated to escape the oncoming Japanese *Ichigo* offensive.<sup>a</sup>

Waiting at the Kweilin airport, Fenn had shared a café table with two strangers, “an oddly dissimilar pair, one being a tall Westerner, and the other an exceptionally short Chinese,” Canadian Laurie Gordon, and Chinese-American Frankie Tan. They were obviously connected with Indochina “somehow” but didn’t say how, their talk “limited by the “undercover nature” of their work, making them cautious of talking to strangers. It was a short meeting, but Fenn took an instant liking to Gordon, and apparently Gordon to him. “When I said goodbye, I little expected that this encounter would radically change the course of my present occupation.”<sup>9</sup>

## “We’re not in OSS to play it straight but to get the job done!”

Meanwhile back in Coughlin’s office, the colonel asked Fenn, “So is it a deal?”

“It’s a deal, if you say so,” Fenn told the colonel.

“Good Man! So I’ll have Gordon contact you.”

Despite his well-known misgivings about OSS—and his links to British intelligence—Gordon now seemed willing to engage in a relationship with OSS. Archimedes Patti, at the time head of the OSS French Indochina desk in Washington and soon to take over as chief of Indochina operations in Kunming, offered background to this change of heart:

*After the OSS/AGFRTS merger in April 1944,<sup>b</sup> the British urged Donovan to use the GBT and, of course, to subsidize it. At first Gordon was adamant about wanting to retain his operational independence, unfettered by national interests and bureaucratic red tape. But recognizing British support limitations and OSS’s resources and growing influence in the China theatre, he finally agreed to cooperate with OSS/AGFRTS, and even to assist OSS in morale operations.<sup>10</sup>*

## The Other Side of Liaison

*We’re not in OSS to play it straight but to get the job done!<sup>11</sup>*

Leaving Coughlin’s office, Fenn was told to see Lt. Col. Robert Hall, another of his bosses at the Kunming OSS base.<sup>c</sup> Hall explained the realities of Fenn’s new assignment.

*I told Colonel Coughlin you were just right for this job. But there is one thing you’ve got to keep in mind. We want to know how Gordon really stands with the other outfits he’s hooked up with. Is he maybe a British agent? Or working for the FMM? Or even Tai Li? [His radio operator at this end is actually one of Tai Li’s men!<sup>d</sup> So get the gen on all of this. But play it cool. Gordon’s a touchy fellow, and that’s putting it mildly.*

Fenn said that Gordon also was “pretty smart,” and “If I don’t play it straight, I’ll be out on my ear.” To which Hall replied: “We’re not in OSS to play it straight but to get the job done!”<sup>e</sup>

Per Coughlin’s instructions, Fenn waited for Gordon to contact him. Gordon eventually wired him from Delhi. He would be in Kunming as soon as a flight was available.

a. *Ichigo* was the major Japanese ground offensive in World War II, aimed at destroying US airbases used by B-29s to bomb the Japanese homeland. It started in April 1944 and ended in December 1944. The Japanese deployed 17 divisions, with 500,000 troops. (See map on page 13.)

b. AGFRTS, the 5320th Air and Ground Forces Resources Technical Staff, a joint OSS-14th Air Force group at Kunming, taken over by OSS in April 1944.

c. “It is difficult to serve two masters. I subsequently discovered that in OSS, one was sometimes called to serve half a dozen.” (Fenn, *At the Dragon’s Gate*, 19.)

d. And indeed he was. Tai Li was Chiang Kai-shek’s spymaster.

e. Cynical, perhaps, but Hall’s characterization of an intelligence service’s purpose does not seem inappropriate. (Author comment)

---

***The GBT and its work was flourishing. Gordon had good contacts with the Free French and better ones with local Chinese warlords and the Kuomintang (KMT) of the Chinese Nationalists.***

---

“Would [Fenn] get ready to proceed with him to his base on the Indochina border?”

---

***River Voyage***

*We came upon a large ferry boat top-heavy with passengers and cargo. . . . Strung out behind were six or seven water buffaloes, only their muzzles and dilated eyes visible amid the torrent. This convoy hurtling downstream shot past us like an express train.<sup>12</sup>*

Fenn and Gordon flew to Nanning, about 500 miles southeast of Kunming, and directly in the path of the Japanese Army’s oncoming *Ichigo* offensive. Gordon’s GBT base was at Lungchow, 100 miles southwest of Nanning on the Indochina border. The only way of getting there, Fenn wrote, “was by sampan up a fast flowing river”; a voyage that would take “eleven groaning days.” The 25-foot-long sampan carried the boat’s owner, his wife, five children, six crew members, and passengers Fenn and Gordon. “Two

cabins, roughly-constructed from bamboo mats, one for us, and one for all the rest. . . . The crew poled the boat from dawn to dusk with no break, but to snatch a meal. . . . As we pushed off against the swift current, a squadron of Japanese bombers swooped down and gave the environs a pasting.”<sup>13</sup>

Moving slowly upriver against the strong current made for long days, endless card games, and time for talk. Explaining further details of his operations, Gordon said he now had a dozen friends in Indochina sending reports, two by radio contact, the others by courier.<sup>a</sup> Gordon said he had recently sent down [into Vietnam] six more portable transmitters, the famous B2 model given him by the British.<sup>b</sup>

The GBT and its work were flourishing. Gordon had good contacts with the Free French and better ones with local Chinese warlords and the Kuomintang (KMT) of the Chinese Nationalists. For the British and Americans, GBT was the major source of intelligence coming from Indochina and “indispensable to the

Chinese and to Chennault’s Fourteenth Air Force.”<sup>14</sup>

Gordon was quite aware that success had stimulated great interest in GBT operations, particularly from the OSS. He told Fenn, “not for the record,” that “both the French and the Chinese were reluctant to have the U.S. [via OSS] come in on the Indochina scene.”<sup>15</sup> The French, because of the “Darlan Affair” in North Africa, did not trust the Americans,<sup>c</sup> and the Chinese had the areas bordering Indochina under their control and “don’t relish American interference.”<sup>16</sup> As for the British, they had limited interest in the area, and no problem with the Americans coming in. The US fleet was moving into the China Sea, and its carrier aircraft would soon be within striking distance of Japanese bases in Indochina. The US Navy would need to know targets, defenses, and weather. That was why OSS was told to get into the show, Gordon said. “The only effective way in is through our [GBT] setup.”<sup>17</sup>

---

***G for Laurence Gordon***

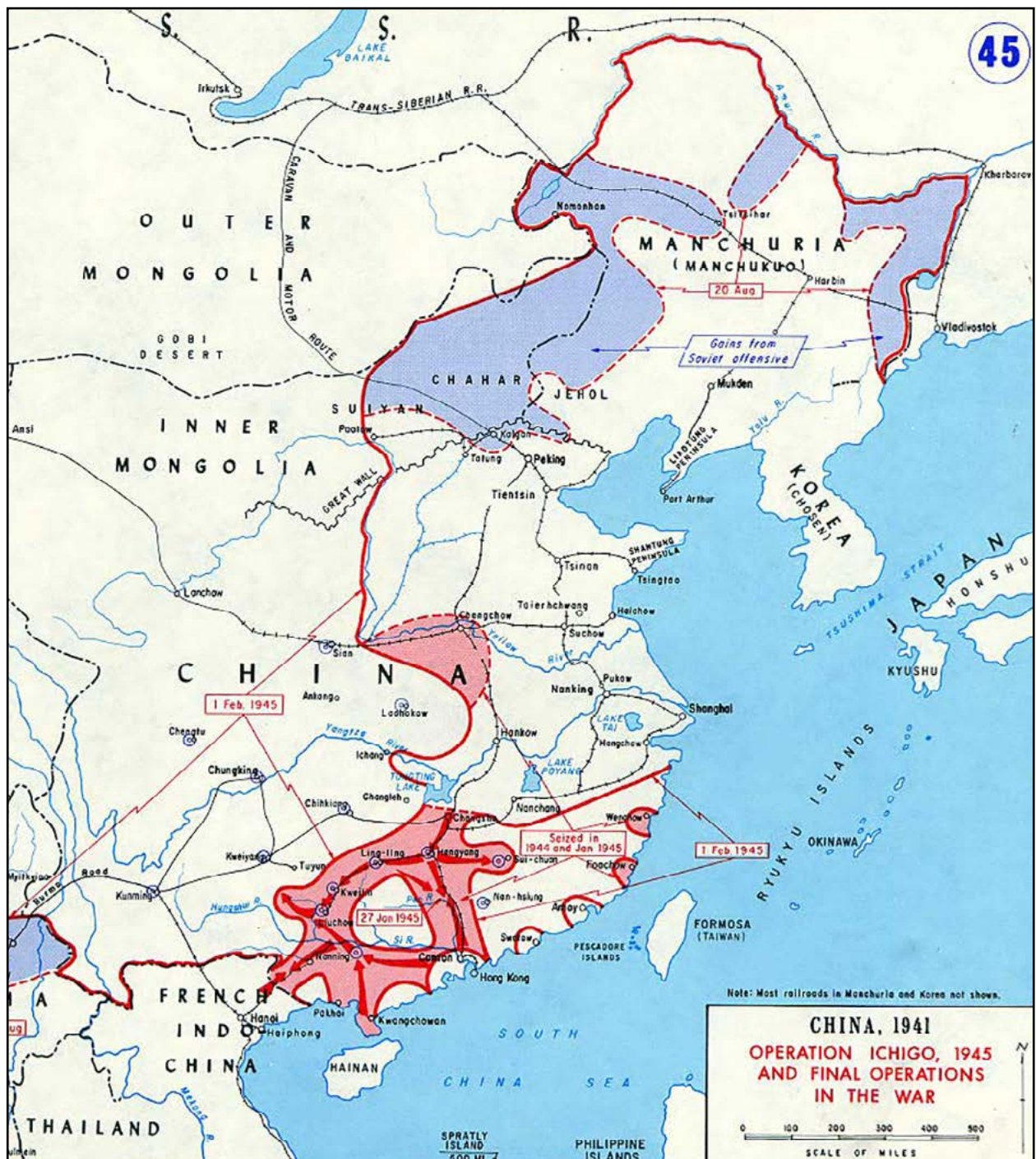
*GBT began operations with couriers. It acquired a limited number of radio sets from the British in India and established stations*

---

a. These 12 presumably were Free French principal agents, each with subagents and other contacts whose reports they transmitted to the Lungchow base. Several were in line for a radio upgrade.

b. “The British Type 3 Mk. II (B2) commonly known as the B2, is arguably the best known of spy radio sets . . . issued to agents and resistance groups and special forces operating on enemy territory.” The set consists of a receiver, transmitter, power supply, small for its day, but too big to carry unobtrusively, often delivered in suitcase version (original was red leather) could be cardboard or wood. See cryptomuseum.com

c. “Days after the Allies invaded French North Africa in November 1942 [Operation Torch], . . . an astonished public learned that French cooperation had been purchased by recognition of Admiral Francois Darlan—the third highest ranking officer of the Vichy Government. . . . Indignant protests in the American press were amplified in Great Britain . . . [that] excoriated [Darlan’s] lamentable record of collaboration, anti-Semitism, and Anglophobia, but especially denounced the appointment as a deliberate and ill-considered affront to the long-time champion of the French resistance, Charles de Gaulle. (Arthur L. Funk, “Negotiating the ‘Deal with Darlan,’” *Journal of Contemporary History* 8 no.2 (April 1973): 81.) Darlan was assassinated on 24 December 1942, by a French monarchist, alleged to be linked to the British SOE or American OSS.



Map courtesy of US Military Academy, History Department ([https://www.usma.edu/academics/academic departments/history/atlas](https://www.usma.edu/academics/academic%20departments/history/atlas)).



---

***It was Laurence “Laurie” Gordon who had thought out the concept of intelligence collection in occupied Indochina, and then went into Indochina to implement his ideas.***

---

*at Hanoi and Haiphong, as well as a headquarters station at Lungchow in China, across the Indochina border. The Chinese government supplied operators for the headquarters station on condition that all intelligence received would be sent to Chinese military intelligence in Chungking.*<sup>18</sup>

It was Laurence “Laurie” Gordon who had thought out the concept of intelligence collection in occupied Indochina and then went into Indochina to implement his ideas. Gordon had an adventurous streak. A British subject born in Canada, he started as a coffee planter in Kenya but gave that up to go into the oil business in Africa and Asia. He was in Indochina when the Japanese arrived.<sup>a</sup> He resettled his family in California, then was convinced by Cal-Texaco to return to Southeast Asia to look after the company interests. When the Pearl Harbor attack brought the United States into the war, that plan was changed, by Cal-Tex, “to infiltrate Gordon into Indochina under semiofficial cover. The cover was provided by Sir William Stephenson, the head of the British Security Coordination Office in New York.”<sup>b</sup>

With Sir William’s help, “Gordon was recruited into the British Secret Service.”<sup>c</sup> He was sent to New Delhi, “secretly” given a captain’s rank in military intelligence, and sent to Chungking to work with FMM. The plan, to set up an intelligence network in Indochina in conjunction with the French, quickly proved unworkable. French involvement brought opposition from the Chinese, and the FMM itself was “hopelessly split by political rivalry.”

The US military attaché introduced Gordon to Admiral Yang Hsuan-cheng, the director of KMT Military Intelligence.<sup>19</sup> Admiral Yang authorized Gordon to operate in China’s Kwangsi Province, which bordered Indochina and had “easy access routes across the frontier,” but Yang cautioned him that Chinese cooperation was contingent on Gordon’s not cooperating with the French intelligence services. While GBT is sometimes spoken of as a British Secret Intelligence Service (SIS) operation, it quickly became apparent that Gordon kept the Brits at arms length, as he did everyone else.<sup>20</sup>

*Gordon initially confined his activities to maintaining a company presence among*

*former employees of Cal-Texaco. Later, “under the guise of a free-lancing oil agent,” he traveled throughout Vietnam. In the process, he renewed old contacts among the French he had known and turned them into informants—“in the interests of salvaging their former company’s assets.”*<sup>21</sup>

That last phrase may explain the *OSS War Report* comment that GBT was started to bolster former French employee morale by giving them a way to maintain their contact with the outside world. The actual beginning of Gordon’s operation inside Indochina does not appear to have been the “casual arrangement” suggested by the *War Report* but seems much more deliberate. There is no record of Gordon receiving instructions from British intelligence in conducting clandestine operations, although it is most likely that he did. It is possible that it was left to him to decide the best way to approach potential sources and that it was Gordon who thought up what was essentially a “false flag” approach to recruit his old contacts. Whatever Gordon may have told his initial contacts at the start, there was no question that GBT agents later knew how their information was being used.

The cover Gordon used while he traveled through Japanese-occupied

---

a. “Gordon had supervised oil-drilling operations for Cal-Texaco in Africa, China, Egypt, and Madagascar, and at the outbreak of the war he was directing the Cal-Texaco operation at Haiphong in North Indochina. (R. Harris Smith, *OSS: The Secret History of America’s First Central Intelligence Agency* (UCLA Press, 1972), 325.)

b. When Archimedes Patti, as OSS Indochina desk chief found OSS headquarters file searches on GBT unproductive, an OSS colleague suggested he visit the New York OSS office, where in February 1945 he found details on GBT. “The New York office of the OSS was located with the British Security Coordination Office at 630 Fifth Avenue. Patti seems to have been the original source of information on Gordon’s early involvement with the British Secret Intelligence Service (SIS), which is not easily found elsewhere. (Patti, *Why Vietnam?*, 44–45.)

c. Sir William Stephenson is, of course, “the famous Churchill’s man called ‘Intrepid,’ then operating secretly and with official American sanction out of New York City.” (Patti, *Why Vietnam?*, 542, fn 6.)



Indochina is also not explained—except that he was a “free-lancing oil-agent” and “buying oil and other commodities for the black market in China.” Those words may in fact explain his *modus operandi*. The black market in WWII China, and the countries bordering it, was a massive and complex enterprise. Everyone with money played: soldiers and civilians, the Chinese Army, Japanese intelligence, and US soldiers and airmen. It embraced whiskey and cigarettes, British fashions from India, and a brand new Buick, if you wanted it. All that mattered was the trade and the money it generated. The rest was a wink and a nudge. Gordon presumably represented himself exactly as what he was, an expatriate Asia-hand, a former employee of an international company who knew his way around—and how to take advantage of the wartime economy that had evolved.

### ***T for Frankie Tan***

*Before the first year of operations had elapsed, Gordon, using British funds, radios and equipment, and Chinese personnel, was joined by two American associates. One was Frank (“Frankie”) Tan, a Bostonian of Chinese extraction, who had known Gordon in Haiphong.*<sup>22</sup>

Halfway through the river voyage, at a place called Talu, Gordon and Fenn were joined by Frankie Tan, the “T” in GBT. With the help of coolies and ponies, Tan was in charge of getting 27 drums of “valuable” gasoline to a local GBT depot. He would join them on the sampan for the rest of the voyage to the GBT camp.

### ***If Gordon was adventurous, Frankie Tan was on his way to become a master of adventure.***

If Gordon was adventurous, Frankie Tan was on his way to become a master of adventure.<sup>23</sup> He was born in Boston of Cantonese parents, “went to good American schools and knew only American ways.” When the depression hit in 1931, his father, a successful Boston doctor with great interest in Chinese politics, decided to move the family to China. Initially, the family lived in Canton, moved to Shanghai, and then to Nanking. The family had just settled in Nanking when the Japanese Army took the city. “We all had to run for it, and I mean literally . . . we were attacked by robbers and fleeced of all our possessions . . . I had to find a job fast, to keep us going.”<sup>24</sup>

Tan’s first job was with the KMT army, laying mines in the Yangtze River, where he was strafed by Japanese fighters and denounced by indigenous Chinese as an “overseas” Chinese spy and arrested. After his release, the only job he could get was with an American company set up in Indochina by Chinese as cover for a smuggling operation. As an American, not yet in the war, Tan was hired to deal with finances. He was arrested by the Japanese while he was carrying a trove of incriminating documents. He managed to escape and disappeared in the back streets of Hanoi. He kept on the move for months until the Japanese gave up looking for him. That was where Gordon found him and recognized his capacity for risk-taking and subterfuge.<sup>25</sup>

### ***B for Harry Bernard***

*Short on words, he was long on know-how, especially concerning technical matters.*<sup>26</sup>

Bernard was hard at work at the GBT base when Fenn arrived. He was the GBT second-in-command, the steady one, “always essentially practical.”<sup>27</sup> Fenn found that the “sometimes acidly ironic” Bernard was inherently very good natured.<sup>28</sup> OSS chief Coughlin assessed him as “not as shrewd as Gordon” and without Gordon’s drive or his “thinking in terms of preserving the empire”; Bernard “strongly desires helping Americans in every way he can,” which is a bit overstated.<sup>29</sup> Bernard’s primary loyalty was to the GBT Group. To the GBT he was eminently dependable, both as administrator and effective agent handler. He kept GBT running while others were preoccupied with their own concerns.<sup>30</sup>

### ***The Base on the River***

*Give me the luxuries of life, and we will dispense with the necessities.*<sup>31</sup>

As the sampan approached Lungchow, “the river banks rose to huge stone cliffs on which a brownish line forty or fifty feet above the present water level marked the height of the floodwaters a few days earlier, a small wonder that we had to wrestle against swirling currents. Our boat tied up at the foot of some tricky stone steps cut into the massive cliff rising to Gordon’s headquarters.”<sup>32</sup> The Chinese had given Gordon the use of the former headquarters of Chinese Customs at Lungchow, aban-

---

***A Belgian-Chinese-Annamese agent named Simon—who spoke all three languages fluently, as well as English—walked 200 miles from Hanoi to check in with Gordon.***

---

doned when the city's steel bridge, which crossed the river marking China's border with Indochina, was destroyed. Perched high above the swirling river, "the setting was a veritable Chinese Xanadu."<sup>33</sup>

Just as exotic was the GBT base staff: Madame Tone, a refugee from Indochina was in charge. "Her daughters, Helen and Janet, did office work, including cryptography." A most important member of the GBT team was radio operator Liang, a colonel in the Chinese army, and an agent of Chinese spymaster Tai Li sent to monitor GBT. Liang admitted his link to Tai Li once it was "ferreted out" by Gordon's clandestine contacts. Gordon kept him on: That "not only kept the Chinese friendly, but also forestalled their surreptitious spying." In any case, as Gordon noted, all the intelligence GBT collected went to all the allies, including the Chinese.<sup>34</sup>

The day after they arrived, Gordon took Fenn across the river, into Indochina, to visit the French military outpost on the opposite bank, "a few sheds and a brick house;" the hosts, a captain and two lieutenants of the French Army—who also assisted Gordon's activities as they could.

---

***GBT at Work***

*No other intelligence group, either military or civilian, had*

*equaled their record of information collected and disseminated.*<sup>35</sup>

In the days that followed, Fenn would get a sense of how GBT operated: An old Chinese farmer who lived in the Haiphong area led in an American pilot who had been shot down while attacking Japanese targets at Haiphong. A French priest approached Fenn to help get "certain supplies, including radio sets," that would help him set up his own intelligence net in Indochina. Gordon turned down that request on the basis that "the FMM would have been furious at such competition," at a time when good GBT relations with the French still mattered.<sup>36</sup>

A Belgian-Chinese-Annamese agent named Simon—who spoke all three languages fluently, as well as English—walked 200 miles from Hanoi to check in with Gordon. He reported the Japanese were doing a brisk business trading opium against mercury and copper ore.<sup>37</sup> Andre, Gordon's main agent, sent a message from Hanoi. "Owing to increasing tension" he was coming up for consultations, bringing along a Gaullist patriot, who was on his way to Chungking to liaise with the FMM. Could Gordon assist in getting them through the growing Chinese border bureaucracy?" Gordon went to meet them and led them through the Chinese lines.<sup>a</sup>

An agent in Lang Son reported via radio that a Japanese general would attend a banquet the next day, hosted by the town's magistrate. Details were quickly forwarded to the Fourteenth Air Force with a request for a small bombing mission. The agent later reported on the results: When the sound of aircraft accompanied the first course, "Don't be alarmed," the general said: The Japanese Air Force knew he was there; the flyover was their greeting. Then the first bomb dropped, and everyone ran to the shelter. Later, the meal started again and the sound of airplane engines recommenced; and now the general led the race for the shelter. This time it was the Japanese Air Force overhead.<sup>38</sup> Fenn wrote: "The more I got to know Gordon's associates, the more I approved of them and him."<sup>39</sup>

One thing bothered Fenn: Gordon's view on working with Vietnamese. As Gordon assured a senior Chinese official concerned about GBT involvement: "We have no intention of working with any Annamites.<sup>b</sup> I agree with you they're all anti-French and quite untrustworthy."<sup>40</sup> Fenn had never worked with Vietnamese—as yet there was no need to—but he did not share Gordon's negative perspective. In the future, working with the Vietnamese would become a serious point of contention between the two.

---

***The Gordon Plan***

*French civilians in [French Indochina] feel that the time has come for them to take a more*

---

a. Concern about the *Ichigo* advance, led the Chinese to station "a strong defensive force" along the border, the "Peace Preservation Corps, a local militia unit armed with rifles made in Shanghai circa 1920, plus a few machine guns left over from the Russo-Japanese War of 1905." Fenn, *At the Dragon's Gate*, 70.

b. Contemporaneous term for those originating from the Annam region of Vietnam which came to be used for all Vietnamese.

*active part in the war against Japan.*<sup>41</sup>

Gordon's reach into Indochina—and the OSS desire to control it—was displayed in “The Gordon Plan,” which Coughlin sent to OSS headquarters on 11 September 1944. Coughlin's accompanying comments note: “Gordon is in contact with 17 resistance groups in Tonkin totaling 412 members, 8 resistance groups in Annam totaling 94, all French civilians, and one company of active troops. . . . [GBT] had remained aloof of French politics . . . steering a clear course of pure intelligence without showing any partiality.” Because of that, and his [Gordon's] “official” contact with the Allies—evidenced by being able “to have targets bombed”—these resistance groups had “acquainted” him [Gordon] with their capabilities and asked for his help, rather than seek the help of their own Free French mission in China that was overseeing Indochina.

The French were not asking for financial backing, Coughlin added, but urgently needed “supplies, arms, explosives, incendiaries, and . . . competent direction. . . . The fact that they come to Gordon indicates they do not feel the French military . . . or [the French] Mission in China, is capable of doing this.”

Commenting on negative Chinese views of the Free French presence in China, Coughlin noted that the “Chinese have permitted Mr. Gordon to operate without hindrance . . . and Gordon can probably clear aiding

**“... [GBT] had remained aloof of French politics . . . steering a clear course of pure intelligence without showing any partiality.”**

and abetting resistance groups with greater ease than could the French mission—all of which sounds like a great vote of confidence in Gordon from all concerned . . . OSS should support the plan—and then to take over control of it.” He added:

*A very natural by product of such a plan would be intelligence. . . . American officers could then be placed with Gordon . . . [who] has not invited us to participate [in the GBT intelligence operations and] would not divulge his agents or his set-up to any outsider. . . . However . . . liaison and association with him may permit our becoming fully acquainted with his intelligence organization and at the same time set up one of our own.*<sup>a,42</sup>

At this juncture, GBT operations were thriving, but the relationship with OSS was not. “So far they've taken everything and given almost nothing except backstabbing,” Gordon complained to Fenn, “with men . . . sent down to compete or even spy on us and subvert our agents. . . . Andre tipped me off to that.”<sup>b,43</sup> GBT had not been advised that OSS had started running its own agents into Indochina. Keeping that hidden from GBT could be justified on security grounds, perhaps, but as the OSS liaison, Fenn should have known.<sup>44</sup> Fenn voiced his own concern, that

for some time “contacts with OSS went sadly adrift.” Communications from Kunming were “chaotic,” asking questions “to which there was no sensible answer,” and sending “directives that [were] inscrutable.” Something was amiss.<sup>45</sup>

### ***OSS: Disaster and Reorganization, October–December 1944***

*It was during this dinner party that the unimaginable took place, instantly shocking the nerve centers of Chungking and Washington, from Roosevelt on down; the fate of OSS in China was fundamentally altered.*<sup>46</sup>

On 16 October 1944, a senior member of the OSS Planning Board, Marine Corps Brig. Gen. Lyle Miller, arrived in Chungking for talks with Sino-American Cooperative Organization (SACO) Chief Tai Li and his Vice Chief Milton “Mary” Miles, a US Navy commodore. The relationship between OSS and SACO had been contentious from the start, but the conference seemed to go well and “ended most amicably.”<sup>47</sup> That evening, “Tai Li, in exuberant spirits, hosted a splendid welcoming party for Miller in the SACO headquarters.”<sup>48</sup> Immediately after the dinner, Arden Dow, the senior OSS officer attached to SACO, rushed to send an urgent Top Secret message to Donovan.

a. The Gordon Plan would not be approved. President Roosevelt responded to the idea in a memorandum to Secretary of State Hull. He wrote, “In regard to the Indo-china matter: it is my judgment on this date that we should do nothing in regard to resistance groups or in any other way in relation to Indochina.” (Cited in Bartholomew-Feis, *The OSS and Ho Chi Minh*, 94 and footnote 96; sourced to *The Memoirs of Cordell Hull*, 2 vols (Macmillan, 1948), 2:1508.)

b. It's not clear if Andre had fended off a recruitment approach by OSS or was told of it by his subagents.

It began, “Very grave diplomatic relations have arisen. General Miller, both in speech and conversation spoke most disparagingly of Madame Chiang Kai-shek, her husband, the Chinese people and the country itself.” A list followed of some of Miller’s colorful statements during a two hour “tirade . . . punctuated by a good deal of table pounding and swearing,” and repeated demands he made of Tai Li to be entertained by Sing-song girls. . . . Many more crudities . . . were later recorded by all the OSS officers present at the party.”<sup>49</sup>

In the international brouhaha that followed, major changes were made. Gen. Albert Wedemeyer, who had just replaced Stilwell as the China theater commander, entered the fray and requested that Lt. Col. Richard Heppner be appointed as his OSS chief and *his* czar of all China intelligence operations—and report directly to him.<sup>a</sup> Thus structured, Heppner’s new role made him virtually independent. OSS Chief Donovan was essentially cut out of China operations, but he agreed, as “this seemed to be the only way Donovan could possibly continue any project in China after the Miller disaster.”<sup>b,50</sup> “Heppner was appointed OSS Chief in China on 9 December 1944” and brought to Kunming his own China team, replacing the heads of every major operational and administra-



SACO Chief Tai Li and Vice Chief Commodore Miles (second and third from left) with US Navy Capt. G. B. Taylor and KMT Gen. C. C. Lin, not otherwise identified in undated photo. © AV8 Collection 2/Alamy Stock Photo.

tive element of OSS in China.<sup>51</sup> The transition was marked by confusion exacerbated by miscommunication.

### 1944: A Difficult Year

*When Wedemeyer took over . . . in late October 1944, the strength of OSS in China was a meager 106 [staff] agents; by July 1945, however, OSS had reached its peak with a total of 1,891 [staff] agents in China.”<sup>52</sup>*

A troublesome year for OSS in China drew to a close. Early in the year, OSS had cut its ties with SACO—the Navy operation aligned with Tai Li that hindered OSS operations in China—and created AGFRTS, hidden within the 14th Air Force structure as a cover for expanding OSS unilateral operations.

The Japanese launched *Ichigo* in April, and OSS created special operations teams to destroy weapons the KMT had cached that were now behind the lines, and mounted new agent operations to collect intelligence in territory the Japanese now occupied.

In October, the Dixie Mission led to long-sought contact with the Chinese communists, and a grand OSS plan for joint special operations and intelligence collection with the communists. With the US Pacific Fleet moving closer to the Asian mainland, OSS was preparing to move into Vietnam intelligence collection operations. With the liberation of France, OSS personnel who had become excess to the European theater were being transferred to China, which accounted for the massive increase in OSS personnel there.<sup>53</sup>

### GBT Moves On

#### November–December 1944

*In the OSS reorganization at the beginning of 1945, the administrative and operational control of GBT was projected.”<sup>54</sup>*

Meanwhile, at the GBT base, it was evident the Japanese Army was coming: “It now became clear that the Japanese, having ringed Nanning, could take it any day and, after this, come up the river and take

a. “Colonel Richard Heppner . . . an attorney from Donovan’s law firm. . . . He and the new theater commander General Wedemeyer, were the best of friends. They had lived in the same barracks in Ceylon while Heppner was OSS commander at the Southeast Asia Command.” (Smith, *OSS: The Secret History of America’s First Central Intelligence Agency*, 266.)

b. Heppner may have been “virtually independent,” but he was very much a “Donovan man.” By accounts of those who knew both, they maintained a close personal relationship.

Lungchao.”<sup>55</sup> It was time to move. Bernard would be in charge of evacuating the base, while Gordon, “tired of OSS double-dealing,” (but unaware of the changes occurring in the OSS structure) decided to go to Kunming for a “showdown.” He asked Fenn to go along.

When they reached Kunming, the two learned of the reorganization and that Colonel Heppner had not yet arrived. The interim OSS boss in charge of intelligence collection, Paul Helliwell, told them that “OSS had written-off Indochina as being of no importance.”<sup>56</sup> That troubled Gordon: To get a clear directive, he intended going to Chungking, to see both Wedemeyer and “then fly to Washington and give them the facts.”<sup>57</sup>

Fenn stayed in Kunming, making a side trip to Calcutta when asked by Gordon to pick up operational funds and equipment the British SOE was offering.<sup>58</sup> In Calcutta, as in Kunming, Fenn found his OSS colleagues suspicious of his work with GBT and his contacts with SOE: “It’s time you told us the lowdown on Gordon and his outfit.”<sup>59</sup> Commenting on one OSS friend, formerly “quite pro-British,” Fenn noted, “But as the war developed, he, like almost everyone else, grew more and more xenophobic until you would almost think it was the Allies we were fighting instead of the Axis.”<sup>a,60</sup>

In Gordon’s absence, Fenn helped Bernard set up the new base at Kunming. Gordon’s talks with General Wedemeyer in Chungking had led to

---

### ***On 9 March 1945, the Japanese initiated Operation Meigo, their contingency plan to take over Vietnam.***

---

an investigation of Gordon’s complaints; GBT’s situation improved, temporarily, and the GBT settled in Kunming. “On most days we would receive intelligence from agents, some by radio, some by messenger, and send, code, decode, and circulate to all our outlets. In the evenings we wrote reports and sent off further inquiries, answers, and instructions.”<sup>61</sup>

---

### ***The Japanese Coup***

**9 March 1945**

*However, by 10 March, the Japanese completed total occupation of Indochina. The result was the inevitable disintegration of GBT.*<sup>62</sup>

When it entered Indochina in 1941, the Japanese Army allowed the Vichy French government to continue its administration of the colony, but after the liberation of France, as the US sweep across the Pacific closed on the Asian mainland, the Japanese, concerned by the French threat against their back, moved to take full control. On 9 March 1945, the Japanese initiated Operation *Meigo*, their contingency plan to take over Vietnam. “Japanese troops took possession of [French] administrative offices, radio stations, the central telephone and telegraph offices, banks, and the main industrial enterprises. They also attacked the police forces and arrested French civilian and military authorities.”<sup>63</sup> Units of the French Army that survived the

initial assaults fought their way north toward the Chinese border.

The Japanese takeover created serious problems for the Allies. The intelligence flow from Indochina they had come to depend on was gone. “Even our air attacks had to cease, because we had neither weather reports nor any check on Japanese movements. Both Wedemeyer and the U.S. Navy sent us urgent pleas to get a new intelligence net operating.”<sup>64</sup>

---

### ***The Last Hurrah***

The complexities of GBT’s final operation to find new reporting sources inside Indochina is beyond the scope of this article.<sup>b</sup> In brief, it was Fenn who made the score. He learned of a Vietnamese named Ho Chi Minh, who was visiting Kunming, known to the French as a long-standing anti-French rebel, a communist, and leader of the Viet Minh, or League for Independence. Ho appeared a good agent candidate, and with OSS clearance, Fenn recruited him. Within weeks, Ho was on his way back to his jungle lair in Vietnam with Frankie Tan and a Chinese radio operator to help him.

Results came quickly. Archimedes Patti, by then in Kunming wrote: “Ho Chi Minh kept his word and furnished OSS with extremely valuable information and assistance in many of our clandestine projects.”<sup>65</sup> By the end of June, Fenn wrote, “Tan and Ho

---

a. This was an attitude the author found to be common to the US airmen, OSS members, and other Americans who served in Southeast Asia during WWII he has interviewed.

b. For a fuller account, see Bob Bergin, “Old Man Ho: The OSS Role in Ho Chi Minh’s Rise to Political Power,” *Studies in Intelligence* 62, no. 2 (June 2018): 7–22.

---

***The war's end was close when two atomic bombs were suddenly dropped on Japan, and it was over.***

---

between them had already set up an intelligence network of native agents that had amply replaced the French net lost by the 9 March Japanese coup.”<sup>66</sup> With the intelligence collection operation in place and Frankie Tan’s return to Kunming, the way was open for OSS to use the link with Ho and the Viet Minh for planned special operations in Vietnam.

Gordon finally returned from his travel to Washington. He arrived in Chungking in mid-May, to face an OSS ultimatum to bring GBT into the OSS—with OSS running the show—or lose all support. “AGAS [Air Ground Aid Service] will let us do it our way,” he later told Fenn, “so I’m throwing in our lot with them.”<sup>a</sup> By then, Fenn was “mostly running” GBT, and once Gordon finished catching up on what GBT had done—most of which he disapproved of—frustration brought Gordon’s inevitable outburst: “You’ve linked us up with an Annamite group whose real interest is to kick out the French, who happen to be my friends. One day they’ll be killing some of those friends, and it’s you I’ll have to thank for it.”

Gordon ordered Tan to disengage from the Ho Chi Minh operation and return to Kunming, which Tan resisted for a time. Gordon moved out of the GBT camp and was ready to leave GBT altogether. Maj. A.G. Wichtrich of AGAS, now providing the GBT financial and other support, offered Gordon a Solomonic choice: “If you won’t run the [GBT] show

under our overall control, how about staying in as civilian advisor and running any activities that don’t involve the Vietnamese?” Present at their meeting, Fenn later wrote, “This gave Gordon a happy way out.”<sup>67</sup>

The war’s end was close when two atomic bombs were dropped on Japan, and suddenly it was over. Fenn’s last assignment was to lead an OSS mercy mission to gain release of POWs in Canton and Hong Kong. For that he was awarded America’s highest peacetime award. For his efforts with Ho Chi Minh, he would lose his US passport, thanks to Joseph McCarthy. Years after the McCarthy hearings he would get it back.

---

***GBT and Effective Intelligence Collection***

GBT is unique in the history of modern intelligence. In its earliest stage it had the appearance of a classic agent net. But instead of being responsive to the needs of a single intelligence agency or even a single nation, GBT serviced the intelligence requirements of a multitude of customers of three major nations. As the *OSS War Report* notes, it took on the characteristics of an “amateur intelligence agency. Subsequently it developed into an actual intelligence network collaborating with Allied organizations.”

The three GBT principals were “amateurs” only in the sense of being novices in the craft of intelligence. They brought to the endeavor first-

hand knowledge of the hurly-burly world of early 20th century Asia and Japanese-occupied Indochina. Their operational environment was a confusion of nationalities and political rivalries. Understanding how this wartime culture worked and could be exploited was the most essential element necessary to conducting successful operations.

The GBT was small, self-contained and well-attuned to its operational environment, the characteristics that made it highly effective. Its fierce independence kept it “unfettered by national interest and bureaucratic red tape,” which Gordon had feared. It gave GBT freedom in conducting its operations and in sharing its intelligence reporting with Allied elements that needed it. The flaw in the GBT was that while it was self-contained, it was not self-sufficient.

In its growing relationship with OSS, the GBT was to receive more funding, technical assistance, and operational guidance that would “aid the development of SO and MO operations and generally expand the GBT network.” The Gordon Plan showed the GBT potential to do that. The idea of working actively with the Free French militants inside Indochina was rejected by Washington. But there was nothing to prevent OSS from helping GBT expand its collection capabilities—when the need for intelligence in Indochina was growing—except OSS’s obsessive need to take over the GBT.

From the very beginning of their relationship, the OSS goal was to control the GBT—when there was no

---

a. AGAS was the US agency responsible for assisting in the rescue of downed airmen in China and Southeast Asia. Its work was divided between the “rescue of downed pilots, liaison with Prisoners of War, and collection of intelligence.” (Fenn, *Ho Chi Minh*, 73.)

good reason to do so. Gordon saw it coming and explained its inevitability to Fenn. Regular OSS reminders of its intentions to Fenn and Gordon became an open sore, distracting Gordon, particularly, from the busi-

ness of intelligence at a time it was most critical.

Absorbing GBT as the quick fix for the OSS lack of collection capability in Indochina begs the question: Why did OSS leadership believe an

actual takeover of GBT was necessary? OSS was working with GBT—not happily, perhaps, but effectively. The drive to take over GBT as its quick fix in Indochina defied the common sense dictum: “If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it.”

---

**Bob Bergin** is a former Foreign Service officer, who researches and writes on historical aviation and Asian topics.



---

### Endnotes

1. Strategic Services Unit History Project, *The Overseas Targets: War Report of the OSS*, Volume II (Walker and Company, 1976), 439–40. (Hereafter *War Report of the OSS Vol. II*.)
2. *Terry and the Pirates* was an adventure comic strip by cartoonist Milton Caniff set in contemporary China. It was launched in 1934. After the United States entered WWII, Caniff focused on resistance against occupying Japanese forces. It was a most popular comic strip in US newspapers. Thirty-one million subscribers read the strip between 1934 and 1946. See: Wikipedia, *Terry and the Pirates* (comic strip).
3. As told to US Navy Capt. Milton “Mary” Miles, then the director of OSS/Far East and Tai Li’s deputy in SACO. In Milton E. Miles, *A Different Kind of War: The Little-known Story of the Combined Guerrilla Forces Created in China by the U.S. Navy and the Chinese during World War II* (Doubleday, 1967).
4. *War Report of the OSS Vol. II*, 439.
5. Archimedes L.A. Patti, *Why Vietnam? Prelude to America’s Albatross* (University of California Press, 1980), 23.
6. *War Report of the OSS Vol. II*, 440.
7. Charles Fenn, *At the Dragon’s Gate: With the OSS in the Far East* (Naval Institute Press, 2004), 36.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid., 32.
10. Patti, *Why Vietnam?*, 45. Patti’s referenced definition of morale operations is worth noting: “A branch of OSS engaged in one aspect of propaganda (“black”) which if not outright mendacious, which it may be, is intended to subvert by every possible device. Its source is disguised and is disowned by the government using it.”
11. Fenn, *At the Dragon’s Gate*, 37, quoting Lt. Col. Robert Hall.
12. Ibid., 47.
13. Ibid., 44.
14. Patti, *Why Vietnam?*, 45.
15. Fenn, *At the Dragon’s Gate*, 48.
16. Ibid., 46.
17. Ibid.
18. *War Report of the OSS Vol. II*, 439.
19. Patti, *Why Vietnam?*, 44 and 542, fn 8.
20. Ibid., 44.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid., 45.
23. Fenn, *At the Dragon’s Gate*, 148.
24. Ibid., 149.
25. Ibid., 149–50.
26. Ibid., 54.
27. Ibid., 69.
28. Ibid., 106.
29. Dixie R. Bartholomew-Feis, *The OSS and Ho Chi Minh: Unexpected Allies in the War Against Japan* (University Press of Kansas, 2006), 94.
30. Fenn, *At the Dragon’s Gate*, 79.



31. Ibid., 43. Laurence Gordon, quoting an unremembered source of the phrase.
32. Ibid., 54.
33. Ibid.
34. Ibid., 71.
35. Fenn, *Ho Chi Minh*, 75. The judgment is Fenn's, but it was shared by most observers of GBT.
36. Fenn, *At the Dragon's Gate*, 64.
37. Ibid., 68. "Thus at one stroke they deal two blows against China, since the opium destroys Chinese health and morals, while the mercury and copper makes detonators and bullets to kill them."
38. Ibid., 74.
39. Ibid., 71.
40. Ibid., 66.
41. Col. John G. Coughlin in his comments introducing the Gordon Plan to CBI OSS Headquarters, 20 September 1944. National Archives, Group 226, Entry 148, Box 7, Folder 103.
42. Ibid.
43. Fenn, *At the Dragon's Gate*, 66.
44. Ibid., 79.
45. Ibid., 72.
46. Maochun Yu, *OSS in China: Prelude to Cold War* (Yale University Press, 1996), 174.
47. Ibid.
48. Ibid.
49. Ibid., 174–75. The general was recalled to Washington and retired "into obscurity." Fenn, *At the Dragon's Gate*, 82.
50. Yu, *OSS in China*, 182.
51. Ibid.
52. Ibid., 226.
53. See Robert R. Kehoe, "WW II Intelligence Culture Shock: From Europe to China: An OSS Veteran's Reflections," *Studies in Intelligence* 61, no. 3 (September 2017).
54. *War Report of the OSS, Vol II*, 440.
55. Fenn, *At the Dragon's Gate*, 67.
56. Ibid., 83.
57. Ibid.
58. Ibid., 107. The OSS Special Operations (SO) Branch was the American equivalent of British SOE.
59. Ibid. John Patton Davies, *Dragon by the Tail: American, British, Japanese and Russian Encounters with China and One Another*, (W.W. Norton & Company, 1972), 287.
60. Fenn, *At the Dragon's Gate*, 114.
61. Ibid., 120.
62. *War Report of the OSS Vol. II*, 440.
63. Bartholomew-Feis, *The OSS and Ho Chi Minh*, 124.
64. Fenn, *At the Dragon's Gate*, 138.
65. Patti, *Why Vietnam?*, 124.
66. Fenn, *At the Dragon's Gate*, 82.
67. Ibid., 206.

Other recommended reading:

Duiker, William, J. *Ho Chi Minh: A Life*, Hyperion, 2000.

Yu, Maochun, *The Dragon's War: Allied Operations and the Fate of China 1937–1947*, Naval Institute Press, 2006.



## Following in Footsteps: The Transformation of Kenya's Intelligence Services Since the Colonial Era

*Ryan Shaffer*

---

***Kenya's intelligence collection and operations were used by colonial and post-colonial governments in a variety of tasks ranging from ensuring social and political stability to the torture of political dissidents to countering terrorism.***

### ***Introduction***

The motto of Kenya's National Intelligence Service is "*Apti Parati Fideles*," meaning "Sure, Ready, Faithful."<sup>1</sup> Yet, throughout the 20th century, the loyalties of Kenyan intelligence officers have consistently shifted through periods of its history, first with the colonial government, then to authoritarian leaders, and later to a multiparty system. In the process, intelligence officers' methods and readiness evolved to address changing internal and external threats and to match the demands of different leaders. Kenya's intelligence collection and operations were used by colonial and post-colonial governments in a variety of tasks ranging from ensuring social and political stability to the torture of political dissidents to countering terrorism.

This article aims to provide an overview of the history of Kenya's intelligence services by focusing on what is now Kenya's National Intelligence Service (NIS). Kenya's intelligence services have cast a long shadow in the country's history by supporting an unpopular colonial government and protecting postcolonial single-party rule, but little has been written about its institutional history, relationships with elected officials, liaison with foreign services, and functions of its intelligence agencies. Drawing from news reports,

published memoirs, and a handful of books, this article seeks to help scholars and US officials with responsibilities in the region better understand the development of Kenya's civilian intelligence services.

### ***Source limitations***

Due to a culture of silence, stringent anti-disclosure laws, and the reluctance of former intelligence officers to write about their experiences, the amount of primary or official government sources about Kenya's security services is small. Notably, Kenyan intelligence officers sign a document to abide by the Official Secrets Act, which makes it a crime to "obtain" or "communicate" a "code word, plan, article, document or information which is calculated to be or might be or is intended to be directly or indirectly useful to a foreign power or disaffected person."<sup>2</sup> Still, primary source accounts written by intelligence officers and victims do exist, and as journalists who have explored the subject from historical and contemporary perspectives, they have contributed a great deal.

### ***Overview***

Kenyan intelligence is a significant part of the country's national security community. NIS's 2018/2019 estimated budget from Parliament is 31 billion Kenyan shillings (Ksh)

---

The views, opinions, and findings of the author expressed in this article should not be construed as asserting or implying US government endorsement of its factual statements and interpretations or representing the official positions of any component of the United States government.

---

---

***There have been important changes, most significantly after the end of the one-party system, when the key mission was preservation of the ruling government's power and suppression of political opponents.***

---

(about \$310 million), but the details are classified, leaving the public to wonder how the money is spent.<sup>3</sup>

While Kenyan intelligence has gone through a series of name changes and mission shifts since the country obtained independence in 1963, they have shown considerable continuity since the colonial era, building from earlier strategies and tactics. In addition, successive agencies have employed the same personnel and similar institutional structures. This should not imply there has been no evolution or political progress. In fact, there have been important changes, most significantly after the end of the one-party system, when the key mission was preservation of the ruling government's power and suppression of political opponents.

This article will address the evolution of the Kenyan services chronologically:

- Colonial Special Branch, 1895–1963
- Early independent Special Branch, 1963–86
- Directorate of Security Intelligence, 1986–99
- National Security Intelligence Service, 1999–2010
- The present National Intelligence Service, created in 2010.

---

### ***The Colonial Special Branch***

The post-World War One Kenya Special Branch was essentially an

import of the British, who had ruled Kenya and Uganda as its East African Protectorate since 1895. It had the purpose of serving as the eyes and ears of the British colonial government against threats to its rule. The original British Special Branch had been created in London in 1883, in response to Irish republican political violence appearing in “mainland Britain in a brief but bloodthirsty campaign.” It provided intelligence to the police who were “totally unprepared.”<sup>4</sup> The British police model, structures and its institutions were then spread throughout the empire, including Malaya and East Africa.<sup>5</sup>

In 1952, the modern Special Branch in Kenya was structured with a professional organization and standardized training for its officers under the authority of the commissioner of police to gather intelligence about the Mau Mau uprising, which the British then defined as terrorism.<sup>6</sup> According to Christopher Andrew's the authorized history of the Security Service (MI5), the Mau Mau “was not a single movement born of primeval savagery” but rather was “a diverse and fragmented collection of individuals, organizations and ideas.”<sup>7</sup>

Wrongly perceived to have been led by Jomo Kenyatta, who was later elected the first president of independent Kenya, the Mau Mau rebellion was complicated with its origins in “internal factionalism and dissent among the Kikuyu people as well as opposition to British rule.”<sup>8</sup>

Colonial Kenyan Governor Sir Evelyn Baring publicly declared



UK Princess Margaret on visit to Kenya, being received in Mombasa by Sir Evelyn Baring, 9 September 1956. © Keystone/Alamy Stock Photo

a State of Emergency in October 1952 that lasted until 1959, which included “collective punishment” and detention of suspects in internment camps.<sup>9</sup>

MI5 was dispatched on an emergency footing in 1952 to “reorganize the Special Branch,” which was “overworked, bogged down in paper” and located in offices where work was “impossible from the standpoint of security or normal working conditions.” Moreover, MI5 found that Special Branch “officers were largely untrained, equipment was lacking, and intelligence funds were meagre.” By August 1953, the Special Branch had substantially improved in “strength” with MI5 officer A. M. MacDonald in Kenya reporting back to London headquarters, “we now have some excellent sources operating” and “have no qualms at leaving this lusty infant to look after itself.”<sup>10</sup>

The Special Branch provided the government both intelligence and law enforcement functions. The Mau Mau uprising and the security “emergency” response turned Kenya into a police state.<sup>11</sup> Caroline Elkins’ history of the Mau Mau experience described British detention camps and a campaign that included the indiscriminate murder of Kikuyu by white and African officers that left possibly hundreds of thousands dead.<sup>12</sup>

A turning point in the uprising was the arrival of John Prendergast, who served as head of the Special Branch and director of intelligence from 1955 to 1958 and drew from his previous experience in Palestine.<sup>13</sup> Prendergast was credited with “bridg[ing] the police/military gap by having several Kenya Regime sergeants transferred into the new Joint Army Police Operational Intelligence Teams (JAPOIT); however, since they were under the control of Special Branch, the focus remained on political intelligence.”<sup>14</sup> Christopher Andrew concluded that the Mau Mau were “effectively defeated by the end of 1956” and asserted that “only thirty-two white settlers were killed during the Emergency—fewer than died in traffic accidents in Nairobi during the same period.”<sup>15</sup>

Decades later the British government officially apologized for its actions. In 2013, Foreign Secretary William Hague said: “The British government recognises that Kenyans were subject to torture and other forms of ill-treatment at the hands of the colonial administration” and “sincerely regrets that these abuses took place,” pledging to pay £19.9 million to 5,228 victims.<sup>21</sup> A subsequent lawsuit by over 40,000 Ken-

### **Special Branch and Criminal Investigation**

Though the Special Branch emerged as a key player in Kenyan security, the Branch’s roots were in Kenya’s Criminal Investigation Department (CID) and its Intelligence Branch, which provided civilian intelligence and was initially a white-only organization.<sup>16</sup>

This was not Britain’s only intelligence service in Kenya, as the Intelligence Department was created during the First World War. It continued to collect information about threats to British interests through the Second World War.<sup>17</sup>

Moreover, there were many earlier proto-intelligence agencies, such as the British East African Police, founded in 1902. It became the Kenya Police in 1920, which had officers who collected information.<sup>18</sup> In 1945, the Special Branch became an independent organization, with its own director, distinct from the CID.<sup>19</sup>

However, the increasing unrest and challenges to the British government prompted restructuring, professionalization. The 1952 emergency has been cited as a key moment for Kenyan intelligence.<sup>20</sup>

yans seeking compensation from the British government is ongoing.<sup>22</sup>

The Special Branch improved its intelligence and operations against the Mau Mau by using pseudo or countergangs. In 1953, Frank Kitson and Ian Feild, British Army officers, were posted to Kenya, where they helped the Special Branch develop its intelligence network.<sup>23</sup> As Kitson

later wrote, the army was “dependent on Special Branch to produce the information on which they could act so they were not prepared to sit idly by without doing what they could to help.”<sup>24</sup>

In 1957, Kenyan Commissioner of Police Richard Catling explained the pseudo-gang method was “used many years earlier in Palestine” and later



British and African soldiers on patrol during Mau Mau uprising. Date ca. 1951–55.  
Photo © INTERFOTO/Alamy Stock Photo

---

***He argued success [against the Mau Mau] depended on the individual relationships between the officers and their African “trackers” in which the groups patrolled areas with dense vegetation and remote areas in single file.***

---

“in Malaya against the Chinese Communist terrorists.” Special Branch officer Ian Henderson, who grew up in Kenya learning the Kikuyu culture and language, joined the Kenyan police in 1945 and was transferred to the Special Branch. With his language skills, Henderson was involved in leading the pseudo-gangs and serving as a “spokesman” for the government in exchanges with the Mau Mau.

In 1954, Henderson received the George Medal for his “immediate command of the Special Branch detachment assigned . . . to bring about a meeting between Government representatives, and those of the terrorists in the Mount Kenya area.”<sup>25</sup> After his expulsion from Kenya in 1964, Henderson served as the head of the Special Branch in Bahrain and remained the country’s head of intelligence until 1998, becoming known as the “Butcher of Bahrain” for human rights violations.<sup>26</sup>

Several Special Branch officers involved in countering the Mau Mau described their methods. Henderson and his coauthor Philip Goodhart explained, “Surrendered terrorists were formed into gangs led by young Europeans, most of whom had been born in Kenya.”<sup>27</sup> In *Gangs and Countergangs*, Kitson described the early methods used by pseudo or countergangs that developed into significant Special Branch efforts against the Mau Mau. After the men dressed as “gangsters,” Kitson went on:

*If all went well the pseudo-gangsters, as we called them, would talk to the real ones, find*

*out what they could, and then come back to Eric [Holyoak] who would decide what to do with the information. He could either return to camp after making a future date with the gang, which was a good way of getting ordinary information, or he could get soldiers or police to the spot in the hope that the gang would still be there, or he could go straight into the attack himself.”<sup>28</sup>*

After some initial skepticism, official approval was granted and training began for using pseudo-gangs, handling informants and interrogations.<sup>29</sup> Mau Mau who were not killed were arrested and put in detention camps where many detainees were tortured, acquired diseases, and died. The Mau Mau also engaged in their own violent campaign, such as the Lari massacre that targeted Kikuyu loyal to colonial authorities.<sup>30</sup>

Kitson subsequently published a memoir about his experiences that described the threat of “sudden” Mau Mau attacks and “army officers such as myself were sent to Kenya to reinforce the police Special Branch.” Before the end of his tour of duty in 1955, he wrote that the pseudo-gangs marked a breakthrough and “success as an intelligence organization depended on” getting “men [to] change from one side to the other.”<sup>31</sup>

Another Special Branch officer who wrote about his experiences was Derek Franklin, who served as an officer in Kenya’s Special Branch from 1953 until 1966. His autobiography

detailed Special Branch history and tactics. After leaving Kenya, Franklin served as deputy head of intelligence in Lesotho and then as deputy head of the Special Branch in Botswana. Like the other colonial officers, his account is shaded by a colonial background, but Franklin nonetheless provides insight into the daily activities of a Special Branch officer in Kenya and his interactions with African colleagues, including William Kivuvani, who became Kenya’s director of intelligence in 1992. Franklin was selective about revealing the Special Branch’s stories even decades later, writing that some amusing ones “best remain in the minds of the participants, and not aired in public.”<sup>32</sup>

Franklin noted how the Special Branch developed human intelligence sources to follow Mau Mau movements and prevent attacks. Following the start of the “emergency,” Franklin’s Special Branch training in the Rift Valley at a camp consisted of “stone huts” and “devoid of any glass” with some basics of local law, culture and language.<sup>33</sup> He argued success depended on the individual relationships between the officers and their African “trackers” in which the groups patrolled areas with dense vegetation and remote areas in single file. Providing an example of the Special Branch’s success, he noted that after being posted to Ndathi in 1955, they reported “over forty Mau Mau, all except one being ‘kills’” in about six months.<sup>34</sup>

After the Mau Mau insurgency decreased, the Special Branch focused on more criminal matters. For instance, in 1960 Franklin was posted to Moyale, a town divided by the Ethiopian-Kenya border, where the Special Branch focused on border



issues such as illegal immigration, smuggling and the actions of Ethiopian forces. Other operations included collaborating with the Kenyan Army to protect cattle from bandits.<sup>35</sup>

Additionally, Franklin described his work with the Special Branch's Surveillance Section, which monitored internal groups, foreign diplomats, journalists, and foreign visitors. For example, he helped track people who entered or left the Kenya African National Union Youth Wing branch in Nairobi, including a surveillance operation in which he was disguised as a government surveyor in a nearby field.<sup>36</sup>

Regarding the diplomatic missions of the Soviet Union and China, Franklin wrote that they "found the identification of the African watchers difficult," but a weakness was that the branch only had six vehicles, easily spotted by trained intelligence officers. Bicycle and foot teams made up the difference in congested urban areas. Franklin also described technical operations, including hiding microphones in tables, relocating microphones for better recording, and a mail interception unit.<sup>37</sup>

### *Independence and the Special Branch, December 1963*

With independence in December 1963, significant shifts occurred in society and politics as well as in the roles and loyalty of the intelligence service. Yet, there was continuity as President Jomo Kenyatta opposed radical changes that risked dramatically reshaping the country's foreign support.<sup>38</sup> Bernard Hinga was appointed the first African head of the Special Branch, serving for about a year.<sup>39</sup>

### *The shift in control of the Special Branch reflected internal politics and Kenyatta's concerns about government officials, including his own vice president, Oginga Odinga.*

On 31 December 1964, Hinga became commissioner of police, replacing Richard Catling, who had served since 1954. James Kanyotu, who started as a police officer in 1960, was appointed chief of the Special Branch and served until 1991.<sup>40</sup> Special Branch officer Bart Joseph Kibati explained that after independence, the Special Branch "became an important department of the Kenya Police, under the command of a Deputy Commissioner of Police" but was severed from the police in 1969 by order of Kenyatta.<sup>41</sup> That same year, the Special Branch was transferred "from the Office of the Vice-President and Ministry of Home Affairs to the Office of the President" and intelligence operations were legalized.<sup>42</sup>

The shift in control of the Special Branch reflected internal politics and Kenyatta's concerns about government officials, including his own vice president, Oginga Odinga. Kenyatta was suspicious of Odinga's support from communist countries and, fear-

ing a coup, sought intelligence about those matters.<sup>43</sup> Odinga explained in his autobiography, "the press highlighted my visits to socialist countries and the monies I had received. There was no mystery that I had received money or how I spent it."<sup>44</sup>

In addition to its interest in Kenyatta, the British government was also focused on Odinga. Christopher Andrew described how MI5, in one instance, received "assistance from former senior members of the colonial Special Branch, whom Kenyatta had asked to stay on after the end of British rule" to bug "at least one of Odinga's houses."<sup>45</sup> Furthermore, Derek Franklin wrote "shortly before and after Independence" Special Branch officers monitored "the activities of several senior African politicians whose trustworthiness was not fully established." He also "began to notice changes on the ground as those who had recently acquired positions of authority, started to use power for their own purposes."<sup>46</sup>



Oginga Odinga (left) during a 1964 visit to Moscow. To his left are Nikita Khrushchev, Ahmed Ben Bela, and Leonid Brezhnev. The trip gave substance to the fears of President Kenyatta. The children of both Odinga and Kenyatta would figure large in later Kenyan politics. Raila Odinga would spend time as a political prisoner and be tortured before becoming prime minister. Kenyatta's son was eventually elected president. Photo © MARKA/Alamy.

---

***A defining moment in the Uganda-Kenya relationship during Amin's rule was Operation Thunderbolt, the Israeli raid in 1976 to free hostages held by Palestinians on an Air France aircraft in Entebbe, Uganda.***

---

Following independence, Kenyans still encountered discrimination from Europeans, and the government instituted a policy of "Africanization" to provide Kenyans with jobs by replacing non-citizens.<sup>47</sup> Soon Europeans in the Special Branch left the country and Kenyans replaced them.

Bart Joseph Kibati is the only post-colonial Kenyan intelligence officer to write a memoir that reveals some of the changes and continuity in the Special Branch. As a nine-year old in 1953, Kibati became a Mau Mau "scout" who watched movements and gathered intelligence. He took the Mau Mau oath in a ceremony that involved biting a piece of meat dipped with goat blood. In 1969, he joined the Special Branch as deputy district Special Branch officer and rose to be second in command of the Directorate of Security Intelligence by the time he left intelligence in 1995. Following completion of the Special Branch Training School in Nairobi, training that consisted of subjects like sabotage, espionage, and analysis, Kibati was posted to Nakuru, where he was mentored by an alcoholic white man "who mostly used his spy training to run away from his wife."<sup>48</sup>

Kibati recounted key moments in Kenyan intelligence history, including investigating high profile assassinations and a coup, as well as other activities, such as surveillance. One notable event was the 1969 assassination of Tom Mboya, an independence leader and significant political figure. The killing led to the

arrest, conviction, and execution of Nahashon Isaac Njenga Njoroge.<sup>49</sup> By 1973, Kibati received further training in Nairobi and was promoted to deputy provincial special branch officer, serving in Mombasa.<sup>50</sup> In his position, he witnessed how tribalism affected politics and government promotions, which in turn affected government administration and justice.

During the 1970s, events in Uganda had ramifications for Kenya, which at first appeared positive but then became negative. In 1971, Maj. Gen. Idi Amin overthrew Uganda's president in a military coup, which brought "guarded relief" to Kenya as President Kenyatta had become distrustful of Uganda's previous leader. According to Kibati, Amin requested Kenya's help in training Uganda's Criminal Investigation Department (CID) and its intelligence services. Kenya "sent Simon Wathome, a Special Branch officer, and John Bell, a CID officer, to Kampala for a year to restructure the Uganda Special Branch and CID organizations."<sup>51</sup>

About 60 Ugandan intelligence officers, including Uganda's future intelligence director Luke Ofungi, received training at the Kenya Special Branch Training School in Nairobi. Courses took as long as six months and were taught by officers like Kibati. Before long, however, Kenya received reports that about one half of the officers trained in Nairobi and in leadership positions, including the director, were "eliminated." Ensuing hostility between the governments led to a rise in the number of troops

positioned on the border, cuts in energy supplies, and the ending of trade. Amin dispatched Uganda intelligence officers trained in Nairobi back to Kenya to spy. There, some defected, and "others were helpful as double agents."<sup>52</sup>

A defining moment in the Uganda-Kenya relationship during Amin's rule was Operation Thunderbolt, the Israeli raid in 1976 to free hostages held by Palestinians on an Air France aircraft in Entebbe, Uganda. The hijackers of the flight from Tel Aviv were members of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, who demanded Israel release Palestinian militants. After a stop in Libya, the airplane landed at Entebbe, where, according to Kibati, "Amin reinforced the demand of the hijackers and gave Israel a 48-hour ultimatum to release the fundamentalists or one passenger would be killed per hour" after the deadline.<sup>53</sup> The successful raid by Israel Defense Forces, which has been recounted in many books, freed all but four hostages, killed Ugandan soldiers, and damaged Ugandan Air Force aircraft.<sup>54</sup>

Before the raid, Mossad agents met with senior figures in Kenyan national security, including Attorney-General Charles Njonjo, Commissioner of Police Bernard Hinga and police General Service Unit head Ben Gethi to gain permission for refueling military aircraft in Nairobi. Kenyatta agreed to permit the planes to refuel and allowed Israel to treat possible casualties in Kenya, but he said he would deny any knowledge if the operation "goes wrong." After completing the mission and leaving Uganda's airspace, the three Israeli aircraft in the raid refueled in Kenya



under the supervision of Gethi, who kept in phone contact with Kenyatta.<sup>55</sup>

The successful operation humiliated Amin, provoking him to denounce Kenya and demand Kenya return land he claimed was Uganda's prior to 1890.<sup>56</sup> In response, the United States and Israel supported Kenya and pledged to protect the country if Uganda attacked. Amin would be deposed in January 1979 during a war with Tanzania, in which he was defeated by the Tanzania People's Defence Force partnering with Ugandan rebels.<sup>57</sup>

### ***Torture and the Directorate of Security Intelligence Under Moi***

Politics in Kenya appeared stable with the unchallenged authority of President Kenyatta and the instruments of power used to silence dissent. However, in August 1978 Kenyatta died and was succeeded by Vice President Daniel arap Moi, who had been vice president for 12 years. Moi would serve as president until 2002.<sup>58</sup> As Special Branch director, Kanyotu "managed" events following Kenyatta's death and ensured Vice President Moi became acting president in accordance with the constitution by preventing three influential men from lobbying the cabinet to not support Moi.<sup>59</sup>

At the time, Moi also was minister for home affairs, supervising "the police and some of the security forces."<sup>60</sup> Having these key roles in the government, Moi knew and "made friends with" Kanyotu and Deputy Director Mwangi Stephen Muriithi.<sup>61</sup> Initially, Moi was regarded as a "populist" voice for the downtrodden, and he released a few dozen political detainees, "most of them spokesmen for

the interests of the 'dispossessed.'"<sup>62</sup>

Kibati noted differences in the way Moi consumed intelligence compared to Kenyatta. For instance, Kenyatta's intelligence briefing was only given by Director Kanyotu, but "Moi would supplement these with briefs from provincial heads and a network of unofficial informers from all sectors of society." Consequently, Kenyatta was informed by what the US Intelligence Community would call "finished intelligence," but Moi's information was raw, which Kibati believed "made him act irrationally sometimes."<sup>63</sup>

Nonetheless, Kibati concluded: "Both Kenyatta and Moi relied heavily on the Provincial Administration and security agencies to run their agendas," and as a result they "had the advantage of providing direct loyalty to the President and there was little political interference in their work." However, corruption and nepotism was a problem. Under both presidents, for instance, the commissioner of lands transferred land at the request of the political leadership, which "was deemed to be pretty much the law" and rewarded loyalists with valuable real estate.<sup>64</sup>

Kenyan intelligence underwent changes during the 1980s, that reflected Moi's authoritarian methods and violations of human rights.



President Daniel arap Moi, Kenya's second president, addressing the National Assembly in 1981. He served during 1978–2002. He had been vice president for 12 years before that. Under his rule, Kenyan intelligence engaged in violations of human rights and other abusive practices. Photo © Keystone/Alamy Stock Photo

Political restrictions existed under Kenyatta, but Moi eliminated remaining opposition by selecting the leadership of the Kenya African National Union (KANU) party and using party members to spread the "views of the president to the grass roots and for controlling the expression of interests within the country."<sup>65</sup>

Opposition to the party was made illegal, and Moi's office "controlled the election of candidates to high party office." He used KANU as a means for "monitoring opposition at the local level." Security budgets were increased and the Special Branch tracked foreign news organizations and aid agencies, even closing the offices of the Associated Press in reaction to a story about a food shortage. By the late 1980s, members of KANU's youth wing "were often present at police raids and in marketplaces," engaging in "watchdog activities."<sup>66</sup>

A few years into his rule, in August 1982, Moi faced a serious challenge when members of the Kenya Air Force tried to overthrow the government. Hezekiah Ochuka led rebels in taking over state media and an air base as they killed hundreds and looted, but soldiers loyal to Moi defeated the rebellion in six hours. Kibati explained, “The attempted coup took place anyway despite the advance intelligence warning by the Special Branch” that could have saved lives and it “changed the political history of Kenya and set President Moi on a new trajectory of authoritarian and ruthless rule.”<sup>67</sup>

In December 1983, the construction of Nyayo House, a towering 26-story government building in Nairobi, was completed and became the Special Branch’s headquarters.<sup>68</sup> Moi had adopted the term *Nyayo*, meaning “footsteps” in Swahili, as his motto in which he claimed to be following in Kenyatta’s footsteps, but it also came to be interpreted as “do what the Office of the President tells you to do.”<sup>69</sup>

The new headquarters was an upgrade from the branch’s previous home, the Kingsway House. Designed in consultation with the leadership of Special Branch, the basement had specially built torture chambers—additional torture chambers existed at another location, Nyati House.<sup>70</sup> The Kingsway House appeared to the public as The Turkoman Carpets House, which sold carpets on the first level.<sup>71</sup>

As stories leaked out over the years, Nyayo House became known for torture and political suppression, which included arrests of students, professors, civil servants, and any



The Nyayo House in Nairobi became headquarters of Special Branch, whose leaders were consulted during construction.

perceived political opponent. In particular, the government focused its resources on collecting and targeting members of Mwakenya, (Union of Nationalists to Liberate Kenya) a banned opposition movement that included a cross section of society. The government’s suppression of the group peaked during 1986.<sup>72</sup>

### ***Directorate of Security Intelligence, 1986–99***

In 1986, a presidential charter renamed the Special Branch. Although its name changed to the Directorate of Security Intelligence (DSI), the Special Branch structures and organizations were retained, as was Director Kanyotu.<sup>73</sup> According to Kibati, the name change meant little to Kenya’s public, as it “continued to be popularly known as the Special

Branch.”<sup>74</sup> As suppression grew, the DSI became the public face of government brutality.

Accounts of torture by security units were abundant during Moi’s regime, but knowledge of the practices became even more widespread after Kenya became a multi-party state and President Mwai Kibaki was elected in 2002.<sup>75</sup> *We Lived to Tell*, one notable publication about Special Branch torture, documented survivors’ stories. For example:

*Water would be poured into the cell and cold and then hot dusty air would be pumped alternately into the cells through the ventilation ducts. The victims would be denied food and for days they would be brutally beaten. Others were shot dead*

*as they underwent interrogation.*<sup>76</sup>

Notably Raila Odinga, son of former Vice President Oginga Odinga, a government critic, and Kenyan prime minister decades later, detailed the torture he endured inside Nyayo House. Odinga wrote that he was interrogated on the roof, where his life was threatened, and was kept in a black cell where he was “pounded” by officers for about 30 minutes “landing blows all over, kicking me in the groin and hitting me in the back of my head” and “used whips and lumps of tyre rubber.” While he was dressed only in underwear, his watertight cell (referred to as the “swimming pool”) was filled with cold water to his knees, which he described as “torture such as I never could have imagined.” He said he endured it for six days in succession.<sup>77</sup>

According to scholar Daniel Branch, this was the most common form of torture used in Nyayo House. He wrote that “detainees were not allowed to leave the cell so [they] had to urinate and defecate in the water.” Branch judged that for more than eight years about 2,000 Kenyans were tortured and interrogated in the building’s 14 cells.<sup>78</sup> It was only in 2003 that the government publicly opened the basement, revealing the torture cells and allowing survivors to return with journalists to speak about their experiences.<sup>79</sup>

From a Special Branch officer’s perspective on the torture, Kibati wrote that the government responded broadly to perceived threats with police, administration, and KANU party officials. However, he described a group of “notorious interrogators under the command of John Opiyo

[who] was based at Nyayo House.” He claimed that Opiyo used torture “tactics” acquired from “US ex-Vietnam CIA agents” who trained Special Branch officers.<sup>80</sup> In 2010, a journalist from *The Standard* attempted unsuccessfully to interview Opiyo, who was never prosecuted and was by then retired as a deputy commissioner of police living in seclusion, refusing to speak to the press.<sup>81</sup>

### **Cold War Challenges**

While some Kenyan intelligence officers focused on domestic issues, others tracked the activities of foreigners. As a Cold War theater of competition between the United States and the Soviet Union, Kenyan intelligence had much to concern itself with. Kibati wrote, “There was a large number [of] CIA and KGB agents in Nairobi, either under the guise of diplomats or other suitable cover.” As Kenyatta tended to be pro-West, Kibati noted that the movements of both Soviet and Kenyan diplomats were restricted in their respective assignments in Kenya and Moscow.<sup>82</sup>

The Special Branch and then the DSI tracked Soviet intelligence officers who left Nairobi to meet contacts and reported these activities to Kenya’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Kibati was personally involved in this surveillance, noting that foreign intelligence officers would often meet their contacts on the “high seas,” which prompted the Special Branch to buy a speedboat with fishing equipment. He wrote that he “did quite a bit of deep-sea fishing, as a cover, while on these counterespionage missions.”<sup>85</sup>

### **Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission on Torture**

In October 2008, the National Assembly created the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission to investigate and record the history of human and economic rights violations from 1963 to 2008 to help promote peace and reconciliation.<sup>83</sup> The commission’s lengthy final report was issued in 2013 and concluded, among many other things:

- *The majority of the victims of unlawful detention, torture and ill-treatment who appeared before the Commission identified the police and the military as the main perpetrators. Within the police force, torture was perpetrated largely by officers attached to the Special Branch which was in 1986 replaced by the Directorate of Security Intelligence. The DSI was disbanded in 1998 and its tasks were eventually passed on to what is now known as the National Security Intelligence Service (NSIS).*
- *The Commission established that in Nairobi, a special task force was established for the sole purpose of interrogating and torturing individuals who were suspected to be a threat to national security or were suspected members of Mwakenya and other such underground movements.*<sup>84</sup>

### **Foreign relationships**

Kenyan intelligence maintained numerous foreign intelligence relationships. Kibati cited work with the British Secret Intelligence Service (MI6) and the Security Service (MI5), explaining he attended an MI5 course in London during 1974. Further he wrote that CIA and West Germany’s Federal Intelligence Service provided training he attended, for example a course in Munich in 1978 that he found to be “too elementary.” He said he later took a



---

***The geopolitical issues shifted after the Cold War ended, prompting Kenyan intelligence to focus on emerging threats, including transnational terrorists.***

---

more advanced class about technical operations. In an MI6 course in 1983, Kibati took part in tradecraft training, which included use of a dead letter box. Beyond training, Kenya also exchanged intelligence with Western partners on issues including “terrorism, drug trafficking and international crime.”<sup>86</sup>

***Years of Change, 1991–1998***

Kenyan intelligence underwent several significant shifts during the 1990s. Director Kanyotu, having served since 1964, retired in 1991, after 27 years as the country’s intelligence chief. Kibati described Kanyotu as a “tall, huge man” who was “an enigma and few people knew him physically,” but he had “direct” access to the presidents.<sup>87</sup> The reason for his retirement is uncertain. One explanation is that he had failed to warn Moi that his minister of health, and later president, Mwai Kibaki, was resigning from Moi’s cabinet.<sup>88</sup>

Following retirement, Kanyotu was involved in many businesses, most notably Goldenberg International, of which he was founder and co-owner beginning in 1990. The company claimed to export gold and diamond jewelry and in turn was paid by the Kenyan government for “earning foreign exchange.” It turned out the company’s export claims were fictitious and the Kenyan government lost \$600 million in the early 1990s, said to be about 10 percent of Kenya’s yearly GDP.<sup>89</sup> Never convicted of a crime or punished for his complicity in the intelligence service’s practices of torture, Kanyotu lived out his life in an impressive 14-bedroom house in Kiambu, which

became a 5-star hotel after his death in 2008.<sup>90</sup>

Longtime Special Branch officer William Kivuvani was appointed the new intelligence chief in 1992 and served until May 1995.<sup>91</sup> At about the same time in 1992, Kibati became chief of administration for the DSI, making him in charge of “all appointments, transfers, promotions, and terminations in consultation with the Director of Intelligence and the relevant provincial officers.”<sup>92</sup>

Even though Kivuvani was one of Kenya’s longest serving intelligence officers, his tour was short, apparently because Moi was not comfortable with him. According to journalist Kamau Ngotho, Kivuvani was friends with Philip Mbithi, head of the Civil Service, who wanted Moi to permit political pluralism, and when Moi’s relationship soured with Mbithi, it “may have sowed the seeds of [Kivuvani’s] downfall,” according to observers. One former senior civil servant said, “Moi felt that Mbithi had canvassed for Mr. Kivuvani,” who “could be in a position to filter information before it got to” Moi.<sup>93</sup>

In just a few years DSI leadership changed again. With Kivuvani’s departure in May 1995, Kibati, as second in command, believed he would be appointed to the position.<sup>94</sup> Instead, Moi appointed military advisor Brigadier Wilson Boinett, whose career included service as director of Military Intelligence from 1988 to 1990 and as military attaché to Mozambique between 1990 and 1995. Boinett was also a member of Moi’s Kalenjin ethnic group.<sup>95</sup> At the same

time, Kibati’s career in intelligence ended with his transfer to the Ministry of Transport and Communication. Kibati believed Boinett influenced the transfer, but they maintained “cordial relations.”<sup>96</sup>

***Post-Cold War Challenges***

The geopolitical issues shifted after the Cold War ended, prompting Kenyan intelligence to focus on emerging threats, including transnational terrorists.<sup>97</sup> In August 1998, al-Qaeda simultaneously attacked the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania with truck bombs, which destroyed the building in Nairobi, killing 213 people and injuring more than 4,500. Immediately, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) agents were dispatched to the countries to investigate in collaboration with their African counterparts.

In Nairobi, the FBI worked with the Criminal Investigation Department (CID). FBI agent Pasquale J. D’Amuro said: “They were genuinely on board and wanted to work with us. CID has some capabilities. They were good with some interviews.” He also said in instances in which the Americans did not want to “draw unwanted attention,” the Kenyans did “what they had to do on their own.” Ultimately, Kenyan CID officers helped find the “first break,” which was locating and interviewing Mohamed Rashed Daoud al-Owhali, the terrorist tasked with forcing embassy security to open the gates to allow the truck to get close to the building.<sup>98</sup>

---

***The National Security Intelligence Service, 1999–2010***

Under Boinett’s leadership, Kenya’s civilian intelligence service became more professionalized.<sup>99</sup> In

January 1999, DSI had its police functions eliminated and lost its executive powers. Left as an advisory body, it was renamed the National Security Intelligence Service (NSIS).<sup>100</sup> Without the power to arrest or search individuals, the service began to move beyond its reputation as Kenya's political enforcer. Its director-general was appointed for five years, although with the possibility of reappointment.<sup>101</sup> Additionally, a formal process was instituted to allow citizens to file complaints about NSIS abuse.<sup>102</sup> Boinett was appointed the first NSIS director-general and was later reappointed for two more years.<sup>103</sup>

Unlike the shift from Special Branch to DSI, establishment of NSIS led to a complete revamping of the intelligence service. The workforce was reorganized and the agency was restructured. Boinett required all NSIS officers to "resign in order to allow the new service to recruit from scratch." Many would be reemployed, but those who did not qualify "were returned to the police force."<sup>104</sup>

According to Boinett, the new service sought "intellectual and material resource capacity" and began recruiting university graduates, who on joining were enrolled in a one-year training academy with US and British instructors. Included in training were psychology and sociology. Boinett described a later restructuring, in 2003, that created an "analysis and production division," with three departments, including political, economic and security/diplomacy, which were later changed to democratic, economics, and foreign/diplomacy departments.<sup>105</sup> Boinett would later be internationally recognized

for his work. At the National Defense University in the United States, from which he graduated in 1991, he was inducted into the school's International Fellows Hall of Fame in 2005.<sup>106</sup>

When Boinett retired in January 2006, he was replaced by Maj. Gen. Michael Gichangi, who would serve until 2014.<sup>107</sup> Gichangi joined the Kenyan Air Force as a pilot in 1977. By 2003 he had become the founding director of the National Counter Terrorism Centre. He was promoted to major general in 2006.<sup>108</sup>

Only a year into his appointment, Director-General Gichangi would lead his NSIS through the nation's worst internal crisis since the end of Moi's rule and the institution of multi-party elections. By 2007, ethnic issues, always simmering in the background, emerged in politics and led to violence after that year's reelection of President Mwai Kibaki, a vote his challenger Raila Odinga alleged was "rigged."<sup>109</sup> The resulting violence resulted in the deaths of "more than 1,100 people and force[d] 600,000 from their homes," according to news reports.<sup>110</sup> The crisis was resolved in 2008 by an agreement between Kibaki and Odinga, in which the latter was given a newly created job as prime minister.<sup>111</sup>

### ***A New Constitution and a New Name, 2010***

The adoption in 2010 of a new constitution, approved overwhelmingly in a national referendum in August, put intelligence on a new constitutional footing and name, the National Intelligence Service (NIS). At the same time it introduced new challenges. Among them was the

restructuring and expansion of the nation's administrative divisions, which required a rush recruitment campaign, according to press reports.<sup>112</sup> Operating on the principle of having at least one intelligence officer in each of the nearly 300 districts that came into existence, the NIS increased recruitment and training, adding more than 300 new intelligence officers over a short period. Reportedly, it helped that the service offered among the best salaries in government. The recruitment drive was aimed at having intelligence officers throughout the county-level government.<sup>113</sup>

In August 2012, Parliament delivered, as the new constitution required, the National Intelligence Service Act, a 75-page document that detailed the structure, functions, and powers of the NIS and repeated the limitations on its functions contained in the constitution (see following page).<sup>114</sup> The intelligence service was mandated to provide intelligence to the government for national security and was responsible for counterintelligence. The NIS would continue to be led by a presidentially appointed director-general, whose appointment was subject to the approval of the National Assembly. (Gichangi would retain his post.)

The service was divided into eight divisions: internal, external, administration, the National Intelligence Academy, analysis and production, counterterrorism coordination, counterintelligence, and operations and technical services. Each was to be led by a director chosen by the director-general. In addition, an oversight board, with investigative powers, "appointed by the Cabinet Secretary on the recommendation of

**Kenya's 2010 Constitution on National Security**

239. National security organs

(1) The national security organs are:

- (a) the Kenya Defence Forces;
- (b) the National Intelligence Service; and
- (c) the National Police Service.

(2) The primary object of the national security organs and security system is to promote and guarantee national security in accordance with the principles mentioned in Article 238(2).

(3) In performing their functions and exercising their powers, the national security organs and every member of the national security organs shall not:

- (a) act in a partisan manner;
- (b) further any interest of a political party or cause; or
- (c) prejudice a political interest or political cause that is legitimate under this Constitution.

(4) A person shall not establish a military, paramilitary, or similar organisation that purports to promote and guarantee national security, except as provided for by this Constitution or an Act of Parliament.

(5) The national security organs are subordinate to civilian authority.

(6) Parliament shall enact legislation to provide for the functions, organisation and administration of the national security organs.<sup>a</sup>

---

a. It did this with passage in August 2012 of the National Intelligence Service Act.

the Public Service Commission” was created to address complaints.<sup>115</sup>

---

**Questions of Performance**

It is not clear how much effect the changes of 2010–2012 have had on the performance of the NIS. As the intelligence act was being adopted, the country witnessed its worst internal violence since the 2008 election, as dozens were killed in clashes with attackers armed with “machetes, bows and arrows and spears.” The violence was reportedly a “mix of ethnicity, politics, land and resource”

disputes.<sup>116</sup> However, there was little violence surrounding the March 2013 presidential election, when Uhuru Kenyatta, former President Jomo Kenyatta’s son, defeated Odinga to become president.<sup>117</sup>

**On the Terrorism Front**

Yet, 2013 witnessed a large-scale terrorist attack that reportedly caught the Kenyan intelligence community by surprise. In September, four al-Shabaab militants armed with AK-47s and grenades attacked the Westgate Mall in Nairobi, randomly shooting at shoppers and leaving dozens dead and nearly 200 injured.

The worst terrorist attack since the 1998 US Embassy bombing, the attack lasted several days and only ended when security forces stormed the building in a rescue operation coordinated by Gichangi along with Kenya Defence Forces head Julius Karangi and Inspector-General of Police David Kimaiyo.<sup>118</sup>

The international attention focused again on terrorism in Kenya and prompted criticism of its national security apparatus. Initial inquiries pointed to coordination problems between police and Kenya Defence Forces.<sup>119</sup> Moreover, NIS was blamed “for failing to infiltrate the plotters and prevent the attack.”<sup>120</sup>

Days after the attack, a parliamentary committee summoned national defense leaders, including Gichangi, to testify in a closed hearing about failures. Reportedly Gichangi told the committee that he did his job and called for an inquiry over the leaders’ actions.<sup>121</sup> According to press reports, the NIS provided “advance warning of the attack to Inspector General of Police Service David Kimaiyo and Criminal Investigations Department director Ndegwa Muhoro.”<sup>122</sup>

In August 2014, President Kenyatta asked Gichangi to resign following alleged internal conflicts. Journalist Isaac Ongiri wrote that contacts from “the presidency” said “the National Intelligence Service Director-General was not working well with the Chief of Defence Forces Gen Julius Karangi and Inspector-General of Police David Kimaiyo.” Specifically, the men accused Gichangi of providing intelligence “that could not be used,” but the final disagreement was “over a security tender” that “could not” be publicly revealed. Another factor,

according to Ongiri, was President Kenyatta's desire to replace members of the previous government with his own appointees.<sup>123</sup>

In the following month, Kenyatta appointed Maj. Gen. Philip Kameru to lead NIS. Kameru had been the chief of the Kenya Defence Forces' Military Intelligence and was reportedly selected for "his success in intelligence-gathering in Somalia" when the Kenyan military conducted offensives against "Somali Islamists in October 2011."<sup>124</sup>

The change in leadership did not prevent failures to predict terrorist attacks. For example, in November 2014 al-Shabaab militants hijacked a bus and murdered passengers unable to recite Quran verses. That was followed by an al-Shabaab attack in December 2014 at a quarry, where dozens of non-Muslims were singled out and killed.<sup>125</sup> A particularly notable al-Shabaab attack in April 2015 at Garissa University left nearly 150 students dead at the hands of four attackers who randomly fired at students, targeted non-Muslims, and then detonated suicide vests when surrounded by Kenyan forces.<sup>126</sup> Not surprisingly, the NIS concluded in 2017 that terrorism poses "the biggest threat to Kenya's national security and development."<sup>127</sup>

### ***Political Instability***

Though terrorism is a serious threat, political stability also remains a perennial concern. In 2017, Kenya held two presidential elections, re-matches between President Kenyatta and Odinga. The first, held in August, was nullified by the Supreme Court over irregularities; Kenyatta won the second, in October, after Odinga had withdrawn his candidacy weeks

before.<sup>128</sup> Nonetheless, political violence claimed the lives of about 50 people.<sup>129</sup> Before the elections, the NIS along with other agencies, including the Kenya Defence Forces and the National Police Service, took part in training on "the role of command, control, communication and intelligence; chain of command and preparedness for violence."<sup>130</sup>

As he had done in earlier elections, Odinga accused the government of interfering in the election, but this time he included a claim that the NIS had engaged in voter fraud by helping foreign citizens vote.<sup>131</sup> Before the first 2017 election, Odinga "released names of 42 police officers he alleged have been recruited to ensure the current administration retains power."<sup>132</sup> The government strongly denied any election interference, and Inspector General of Police Joseph Boinnet rebuked Odinga and suggested a misunderstanding had taken place, explaining the men were new NIS recruits who had just left police service.<sup>133</sup>

### ***Corruption***

More recently, the NIS has been involved in corruption probes. In 2018, Kenyatta ordered the NIS to investigate the lifestyles of public officials, including himself, and have them explain their assets.<sup>134</sup> NIS documents were used to investigate corrupt officials and audit government departments with NIS Director-General Kameru personally briefing President Kenyatta about the issue.<sup>135</sup>

The role in auditing and investigating officials' assets is notable as the NIS has no formal law enforcement duties and points to a shortcoming in Kenya's intelligence

community. In fact, Kibati discussed potential intelligence reforms and wrote that the 1999 severance of criminal intelligence from the national intelligence agency left "an empty space." He added that "Kenya does not have a criminal intelligence unit," but needs a formal one to provide law enforcement with necessary criminal intelligence products.<sup>136</sup>

### ***Conclusion***

Like the country itself, Kenyan intelligence has evolved dramatically since the colonial era. As the Special Branch it was a tool of colonial repression and a weapon to silence dissent in a single-party state. Repeated reforms since then have professionalized the service and divorced it from past human rights violations.

As intelligence services do almost everywhere around the world, Kenya's intelligence community has played an important role in social, economic, and political stability. Memoirist Kibati, reflecting on his country's intelligence services, wrote that the "work we were involved in was quite beneficial to the country" and was one of the most "successful" of the country's "government agencies" from independence to the 1990s.<sup>137</sup>

Unfortunately, and self-servingly, Kibati downplayed the role of Kenyan intelligence in human rights violations, and he fails to evaluate intelligence completely, not only in terms of its ability to prevent coups and violence and to safeguard borders but also to protect the rights of citizens. His bottom line reads:

*Forgetting the criticism often heard that the Special Branch*

---

**As intelligence services do almost everywhere around the world, Kenya's intelligence community has played an important role in social, economic, and political stability.**

---

*did not respect human rights, criticism that may be deserved at least for some elements within the security services that were not necessarily the Special Branch, I can say with confidence that the Special Branch was a successful outfit.*<sup>138</sup>

Darkly, Kibati asserts that while the Special Branch is no longer around today, it was never “officially

disbanded,” only “left as an empty shell, unmanned, without resources, and forgotten.”<sup>139</sup> Yet, the abusive record of Special Branch and its successor, the Directorate of Security Intelligence, has not been forgotten. Former officers and the victims who suffered at Nyayo House have told their stories in memoirs and news articles. Presidential candidate Odinga himself discussed the effects of his torture during a presidential debate

in 2017.<sup>140</sup> The Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission gathered stories from victims and its lengthy report described many human rights violations by Kenyan intelligence services.

It remains to be seen whether the Kenyan government will systematically and officially provide more information to its citizens about its intelligence community so people can separate reality from fiction and allow citizens to understand their intelligence services better.



---

**Ryan Shaffer** is a writer and historian. His academic work explores Asian, African and European history.

---

### Endnotes

1. Macharia Gaitho, “Now that Gichangi is out, will our Intelligence live up to their calling?,” *Daily Nation*, August 18, 2014. Online at <https://mobile.nation.co.ke/blogs/-Major-General-Michael-Gichangi-resignation/1949942-2423146-format-xhtml-ni42m6z/index.html>. It has also been translated into “Capable, Available and Reliable,” in Mwenda Njoka, “Kenya: How Two Terror Attacks Were Planned And Executed,” *Daily Nation*, January 21, 2006. Online at <http://www.allafrica.com/stories/200601200761.html>. Special thanks to Professor Mwangi D. Njagi of American University for his helpful comments on an earlier draft.
2. John B. Osoro, “Revelation of official secrets is not only unethical but very dangerous for Kenya,” *Daily Nation*, August 13, 2012. Online at <https://www.nation.co.ke/oped/opinion/Revelation-of-official-secrets-is-not-only-unethical/440808-1478426-frwnlw/index.html>; “Official Secrets Act,” The Republic of Kenya, 2012. Online at <https://www.nis.go.ke/downloads/Official%20Secrets%20Act,Cap%20187.pdf>
3. James Anyanzwa, “Kenya Releases 2018/19 Budget Estimates of Eye-Popping \$31b,” *The East African*, June 11, 2018. Online at <http://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/business/Kenya-releases-eye-popping-USD31-billion-budget/2560-4605770-g83ou1z/index.html>
4. Ray Wilson and Ian Adams, *Special Branch: A History: 1883–2006* (Biteback Publishing, 2015), xvii, 20.
5. Christopher Andrew, *The Defence of the Realm: The Authorized History of MI5* (Allen Lane, 2009), 459.
6. Bart Joseph Kibati, *Memoirs of a Kenyan Spymaster* (Nairobi Academic Press, 2016), 44, 49.
7. Andrew, *The Defence of the Realm*, 457.
8. Ibid.
9. Nicholas van der Bijl, *Mau Mau Rebellion: The Emergency in Kenya 1952–1956* (Pen and Sword, 2017), 51.
10. Andrew, *The Defence of the Realm*, 456–57.
11. Ibid., 458.
12. Caroline Elkins, *Imperial Reckoning: The Untold Story of Britain's Gulag in Kenya* (Henry Holt, 2005), xvi, 85.
13. Andrew, *The Defence of the Realm*, 458.
14. Van der Bijl, *Mau Mau Rebellion*, 81.
15. Andrew, *The Defence of the Realm*, 458.
16. *Legislative Council Debates, Colony and Protectorate of Kenya*, no. 8 (4 September 1939 to 5 January 1940), 61; Wilson Boinett, “The Origins of the Intelligence System of Kenya,” in Sandy Africa and Johnny Kwadjo (eds.), *Changing Intelligence Dynamics in Africa* (GFN-SSR and ASSN, 2009), 23.
17. *Report of the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission*, Volume IIA (Nairobi: Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission, 2013), 61. Online at [https://www.kenya-today.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/TJRC\\_report\\_Volume\\_2A.pdf](https://www.kenya-today.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/TJRC_report_Volume_2A.pdf)
18. Boinett, “The Origins of the Intelligence System of Kenya,” 21.



19. Kibati, *Memoirs*, 48; Boinett, "The Origins of the Intelligence System of Kenya," 24.
20. *Report of the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission*, Volume IIA (Nairobi: Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission, 2013), 62. Online at [https://www.kenya-today.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/TJRC\\_report\\_Volume\\_2A.pdf](https://www.kenya-today.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/TJRC_report_Volume_2A.pdf)
21. "Mau Mau torture victims to receive compensation – Hague," BBC, June 6, 2013. Online at <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-22790037>
22. Katie Engelhart, "40,000 Kenyans accuse UK of abuse in second Mau Mau case," *The Guardian*, October 29, 2014. Online at <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/oct/29/kenya-mau-mau-abuse-case>; John Kamau, "Mau Mau case quietly going on in London," *Daily Nation*, August 27, 2017. Online at <https://www.nation.co.ke/news/1056-4072424-9a7ta4/index.html>
23. "Lt-Col Ian Feild," *The Telegraph*, December 14, 2009. Online at <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/obituaries/military-obituaries/army-obituaries/6811686/Lt-Col-Ian-Feild.html>
24. Frank Kitson, *Gangs and Countergangs* (Barrie and Rockliff, 1960), 18–19.
25. Ian Henderson and Philip Goodhart, *Man Hunt in Kenya: The Termination of a Most Bizarre and Violent Terrorist Organization* (Bantam, 1988), 26–29.
26. "Kenya Continuing Britons' Expulsion," *New York Times*, August 7, 1964. Online at <https://www.nytimes.com/1964/08/07/archives/kenya-continuing-britons-exp>; Robert Fisk, "Briton at the heart of Bahrain's brutality rule," *The Independent*, February 18, 1996. Online at <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/briton-at-the-heart-of-bahrains-brutality-rule-1319571.html>; "Ian Henderson," *The Herald*, May 7, 2013. Online at [http://www.heraldsotland.com/opinion/13103616.Ian\\_Henderson/](http://www.heraldsotland.com/opinion/13103616.Ian_Henderson/); Tony Thompson, "Britain silent on 'Butcher of Bahrain'," *The Guardian*, June 29, 2002. Online at <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2002/jun/30/uk.world>; See Associated Press news footage: "CAN291 Notorious Enforcer Ian Henderson Deported from Kenya at Its Independence," YouTube, July 28, 2015. Online at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aEiljYjVh0>
27. Ian Henderson and Philip Goodhart, *Man Hunt in Kenya*, 7.
28. Kitson, *Gangs and Countergangs*, 76.
29. *Ibid.*, 92, 103.
30. Elkins, *Imperial Reckoning*, 70, 71.
31. Frank Kitson, *Bunch of Five* (Faber & Faber, 1977), 19, 45. Kitson later offered methods for countering subversion and insurgency and argued that "even an efficient intelligence organization has got to expand and adapt itself to new circumstances." Frank Kitson, *Low Intensity Operations: Subversion, Insurgency and Peacekeeping* (Faber & Faber, 1973), 72. In another book, Kitson wrote about the need "to establish a strong intelligence organization in order to provide the government with information it needs to work out policy and to provide the security forces with the information that they need to conduct operations." Frank Kitson, *Warfare As a Whole* (Faber & Faber, 1987), 65.
32. Derek Franklin, *A Pied Cloak: Memoirs of a Colonial Police (Special Branch) Officer* (Janus Publishing Company, 2006), 6, 43, 131, 133, 143, 148, 150.
33. *Ibid.*, 44.
34. *Ibid.*, 61, 63.
35. *Ibid.*, 106, 123.
36. *Ibid.*, 134.
37. *Ibid.*, 136, 137.
38. Daniel Branch, *Kenya: Between Hope and Despair, 1963–2011* (Yale University Press, 2011), 36, 39.
39. Derek Kenneth Kwama, "Jomo Kenyatta era spy chief, James Kanyotu, was secretive even in death," *The Standard*, November 27, 2013. Online at <https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/article/2000098794/jomo-kenyatta-era-spy-chief-james-kanyotu-was-secretive-even-in-death>; Nigel West, *Historical Dictionary of International Intelligence* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2015), 187.
40. "James Kanyotu: The most elusive dreaded spy chief who warned Moi of 1982 coup plot," *SDE*, 2017. Online at <https://www.sde.co.ke/thenairobi/article/2001233700/james-kanyotu-the-most-elusive-dreaded-spy-chief-who-warned-moi-of-1982-coup-plot>; Mugo-mo Munene, "Former shadowy spy," *Daily Nation*, February 14, 2008. Online at <https://www.nation.co.ke/lifestyle/1190-228878-g0k-gh9z/index.html>; Francis K. Sang, *A Noble But Onerous Duty: An Autobiography by Former Director of Criminal Investigation Department (CID)* (AuthorHouse, 2013), 29; Charles Hornsby, *Kenya: A History Since Independence* (I.B.Tauris, 2013), 100.
41. Kibati, *Memoirs*, 44–45.
42. *Ibid.*, 49, 50.
43. Andrew, *The Defence of the Realm*, 472–73.
44. Oginga Odinga, *Not Yet Uhuru: An Autobiography* (East African Educational Publishers, 1968), 200.
45. Andrew, *The Defence of the Realm*, 472.
46. Franklin, *A Pied Cloak*, 139, 141.
47. "Britain is the Target of Kenyan Asians," *New York Times*, April 11, 1971. Online at <https://www.nytimes.com/1971/04/11/archives/britain-is-target-of-kenyan-asians-immigration-restriction-on.html>
48. Kibati noted Special Branch officer Simon Wathome wrote a memoir, but "mainly glossed over his career and focused mostly on his family in his book." Kibati, *Memoirs*, xiii, 2, 5, 17, 18, 44, 224.
49. *Ibid.*, 63; Branch, *Kenya*, 83, 84.
50. Kibati, *Memoirs*, 82.

51. Ibid., 93, 94.
52. Ibid., 95–97.
53. Ibid., 112.
54. For example: Saul David, *Operation Thunderbolt: Flight 139 and the Raid on Entebbe Airport, the Most Audacious Hostage Rescue Mission in History* (Little, Brown and Company, 2015).
55. David, *Operation Thunderbolt*, 203, 285, 286, 326.
56. Kibati, *Memoirs*, 113.
57. David, *Operation Thunderbolt*, 349, 367.
58. Jennifer A. Widner, *The Rise of a Party-State in Kenya: From Harambee! to Nyayo!* (University of California Press, 1992), 133.
59. Kamau Ngotho, “Tough call for Kanyotu in the Kenyatta succession saga,” *Daily Nation*, May 29, 2008. Online at <https://www.nation.co.ke/lifestyle/1190-234408-g01s6nz/index.html>
60. Widner, *The Rise of a Party-State in Kenya*, 135.
61. Kibati, *Memoirs*, 212. Muriithi later sued Moi over a land dispute. Joseph Openda, “Former intelligence officer sues Daniel Moi over land,” *Daily Nation*, March 7, 2017. Online at <https://www.nation.co.ke/news/Former-intelligence-officer-sues-Moi-over-land/1056-3840056-lr03b9z/index.html>
62. Widner, *The Rise of a Party-State in Kenya*, 136, 137.
63. Kibati, *Memoirs*, 188.
64. Ibid., 188, 190.
65. Widner, *The Rise of a Party-State in Kenya*, 158.
66. Widner, *The Rise of a Party-State in Kenya*, 145–46, 160, 170.
67. Kibati, *Memoirs*, 135.
68. Branch, *Kenya*, 161; Daniel Wesangula, “Inside the walls of the house that kept Kenya’s dark secrets,” *Daily Nation*, May 5, 2012. Online at <https://www.nation.co.ke/news/1056-1400370-14c2rpoz/index.html>
69. Widner, *The Rise of a Party-State in Kenya*, 130.
70. Wesangula, “Inside the walls of the house that kept Kenya’s dark secrets.”
71. Kibati, *Memoirs*, 125.
72. Stephen Mburu, “Govt reaction was very harsh,” *Daily Nation*, March 12, 2000. Online at <https://www.nation.co.ke/news/1056-372744-17yig3z/index.html>
73. “NIS: Historical Background,” *National Intelligence Service*, 2018. Online at <https://www.nis.go.ke/history.html>
74. Kibati, *Memoirs*, 45.
75. There are numerous press reports, books and memoirs about the torture. For example: “Meet Israel Agina who is the longest serving detainee Nyayo house torture chambers,” YouTube, November 11, 2013. Online at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oj5RILo-Qfw>; Ngotho wa Kariuki, *Two Weeks in Hell: Inside Nyayo Torture Chambers* (Medi-Teki Publishers, 2015); Tom Odhiambo, “Two weeks in hell: A retake of Nyayo torture chambers,” *Daily Nation*, September 5, 2015. Online at <https://www.nation.co.ke/lifestyle/lifestyle/Two-weeks-in-hell-A-retake-of-Nyayo-torture-chambers/1214-2859208-1qtjpt/index.html>
76. *We Lived to Tell: The Nyayo House Story* (Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2003), x.
77. Raila Odinga and Sarah Elderkin, *The Flame of Freedom* (Mountain Top Publishers, 2013), 339–41.
78. Branch, *Kenya*, 162, 166.
79. “Kenya Torture Chamber Focuses Attention on Abuses of Moi Government,” *Voice of America*, February 2, 2003. Online at <https://www.voanews.com/a/a-13-a-2003-02-25-30-kenya-66844767/375484.html>; “Kenya opens up torture chamber,” *The Scotsman*, February 12, 2003. <https://www.scotsman.com/news/world/kenya-opens-up-torture-chamber-1-545786>
80. Kibati, *Memoirs*, 162.
81. Kipchumba Some, “Mystery of meeting elusive Nyayo House ‘Torturer-in-chief’,” *The Standard*, October 23, 2010. Online at <https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/business/article/2000020877/mystery-of-meeting-elusive-nyayo-house-torturer-in-chief>
82. Kibati, *Memoirs*, 202.
83. “Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Act,” The Republic of Kenya, 2008. Online at <http://www.kenyalaw.org/lex/actview.xql?actid=-No.%206%20of%202008>
84. *Report of the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission*, Volume IIA (Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission, 2013), 597. Online at [https://www.kenya-today.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/TJRC\\_report\\_Volume\\_2A.pdf](https://www.kenya-today.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/TJRC_report_Volume_2A.pdf)
85. Kibati, *Memoirs*, 203.
86. Ibid., 205–209.
87. Ibid., 220–21.
88. Kamau Ngotho, “The life and times of a spymaster,” *Daily Nation*, July 16, 2001. Online at <https://www.nation.co.ke/news/1056-336120-lad1iaz/index.html>
89. “How Goldenberg scandal was hatched and executed,” *Daily Nation*, November 24, 2012. Online at <https://www.nation.co.ke/news/How-Goldenberg-scandal-was-hatched-and-executed-/1056-1628532-8k2yos/index.html> ; Branch, *Kenya*, 219. See also “Moi ‘ordered’ Goldenberg payment,” BBC, February 17, 2004. Online at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/3495689.stm>

90. "Say what? Former Kenya's Chief Spy James Kanyotu's 14-bedroom fortress in Kiambu," *SDE*, 2017. Online at <https://www.sde.co.ke/pulse/article/2001249643/say-what-former-kenya-s-chief-spy-james-kanyotu-s-14-bedroom-fortress-in-kiambu>
91. Kibati, *Memoirs*, 224; Daniel Nzia, "Mutula: I am going to 'paradise'," *The Standard*, May 2, 2013. Online at <https://www.standard-media.co.ke/article/2000082759/mutula-i-am-going-to-paradise>
92. Kibati, *Memoirs*, 164.
93. Kamau Ngotho, "Arrival of powerful PS signalled spy's downfall," *Daily Nation*, July 16, 2001. Online at <https://www.nation.co.ke/news/1056-336122-lad1i8z/index.html>
94. Kibati, *Memoirs*, 224.
95. Odindo Ayieko, "Long line of soldiers on presidential duty," *Daily Nation*, April 25, 2005. Online at <https://www.nation.co.ke/life-style/1190-56120-dmrs58z/index.html>
96. Kibati, *Memoirs*, 224, 226.
97. Terrorism was a concern prior to the 1998, but the US Embassy bombing marked the start of terrorism as a "scholarly and policy focus." Edward Mogire and Kennedy Mkutu Agade, "Counter-terrorism in Kenya," *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 29, no. 4 (2011): 485.
98. Tod Hoffman, *Al Qaeda Declares War: The African Embassy Bombings and America's Search for Justice* (ForeEdge, 2014), 7, 51, 52.
99. Muchemi Wachira, "Wilson Boinett: Military man who turned around NIS," *Daily Nation*, September 11, 2014. Online at <https://www.nation.co.ke/news/Military-man-who-turned-around-NIS/1056-2449782-letkpnz/index.html>
100. Kibati, *Memoirs*, 50; "The National Security Intelligence Service Act," The Republic of Kenya, 1998. Online at [https://www.nis.go.ke/downloads/National%20Security%20Intelligence%20Service%20Act,%2011%20of%201998\\_.pdf](https://www.nis.go.ke/downloads/National%20Security%20Intelligence%20Service%20Act,%2011%20of%201998_.pdf)
101. Ibid.
102. Boinett, "The Origins of the Intelligence System of Kenya," 30.
103. Wachira, "Wilson Boinett: Military man who turned around NIS."
104. Boinett, "The Origins of the Intelligence System of Kenya," 31.
105. Ibid., 31, 32.
106. "U.S. honors Kenya intel chief," UPI, September 23, 2005. Online at <https://www.upi.com/US-honors-Kenya-intel-chief/10971127501487/>
107. "National Intelligence Service director Michael Gichangi resigns," *The Standard*, August 15, 2014. Online at: <https://www.standard-media.co.ke/article/2000131469/national-intelligence-service-director-michael-gichangi-resigns>
108. "Who is this man Michael Gichangi?," YouTube, August 21, 2014. Online at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EI13dDGfJpE>; Lucas Barasa, "Kenya: NSIS Boss Has His Work Cut Out," *Daily Nation*, January 18, 2006. Online at <http://allafrica.com/stories/200601171219.html>; "Kenya: Gichangi Replaces Boinett As NSIS Boss," *The East African Standard*, January 17, 2006. Online at <http://allafrica.com/stories/200601160660.html>
109. "Kenya since 2007–2008 post-election violence," *Daily Nation*, August 6, 2017. Online at <https://www.nation.co.ke/news/politics/Kenya-since-post-election-violence-/1064-4046876-12j38pyz/index.html>
110. Ibid.
111. Wangui Kanina and Daniel Wallis, "Kenya's Kibaki unveils power-sharing cabinet," *Reuters*, April 12, 2008. Online at <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-kenya-politics/kenyas-kibaki-unveils-power-sharing-cabinet-idUSHUL26486020080413>; "Act Title: National Accord and Reconciliation," *The Republic of Kenya*, March 20, 2008. Online at <http://www.kenyalaw.org/lex/actview.xql?actid=-No.%204%20of%202008>
112. Cyrus Ombati, "300 new spies will soon be in your midst," *The Standard*, September 8, 2010. Online at: <https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/business/article/2000017897/300-new-spies-will-soon-be-in-your-midst>; Mugumo Munene, "Kenya: Ex-Spy Chief Stood Out for His Dedication to Service," *Daily Nation*, January 18, 2006. Online at <http://allafrica.com/stories/200601171206.html>
113. Ombati, "300 new spies will soon be in your midst," *The Standard*, September 8, 2010. Online at: <https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/business/article/2000017897/300-new-spies-will-soon-be-in-your-midst>
114. "The National Intelligence Service Act," *The Republic of Kenya*, August 27, 2012. Online at <https://www.nis.go.ke/downloads/THE%20NATIONAL%20INTELLIGENCE%20SERVICE%20ACT,%202012.pdf>
115. "Organizational Structure," *National Intelligence Service*, 2018. Online at <https://www.nis.go.ke/ourdivisions.html>; "The National Intelligence Service Act," *The Republic of Kenya*, August 27, 2012. Online at <https://www.nis.go.ke/downloads/THE%20NATIONAL%20INTELLIGENCE%20SERVICE%20ACT,%202012.pdf>
116. "Dozens killed in Kenya clashes," *Al Jazeera*, August 23, 2012. Online at <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2012/08/201282214141543505.html>
117. Faith Karimi and Nima Elbagir, "Vote counting begins after largely peaceful election in Kenya," CNN, March 4, 2013. Online at <https://www.cnn.com/2013/03/04/world/africa/kenya-elections/index.html>
118. Lucas Barasa, "39 killed in worst attack since 1998," *Daily Nation*, September 21, 2013. Online at <https://www.nation.co.ke/news/Worst-terror-attack-since-August-1998-/1056-2002370-8719xw/index.html>; "Troops fighting 'one or two' gunmen in Westgate Mall: Security sources," *Daily Nation*, September 24, 2013. Online at <https://www.nation.co.ke/news/Troops-fighting-one-two-gunmen-in-Westgate-Mall-Security-/1056-2004880-e3ymdo/index.html>

119. “Blame game over Westgate attack,” *Daily Nation*, September 26, 2013. Online at <https://www.nation.co.ke/news/Blame-game-over-Westgate-attack/1056-2009266-yoxwxfz/index.html>
120. Mutuma Mathiu, “Security agencies failed in the face of Westgate Mall attack,” *Daily Nation*, September 18, 2014. Online at <https://www.nation.co.ke/news/Security-agencies-failed-in-the-face-of-Westgate-Mall-attack-/1056-2457454-ftd41w/index.html> ; “Mall attack blamed on weak intelligence,” *Daily Nation*, November 14, 2013. Online at <https://www.nation.co.ke/news/Mall-attack-blamed-on-weak-intelligence/1056-2073758-6cek3kz/index.html>
121. “Spy boss Michael Gichangi grilled over Westgate terror attack,” YouTube, September 26, 2013. Online at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZbyKvBYiEmM>
122. David Mwere and Dominic Wabala, “Kenya: ‘NIS Gave Advance Westgate Warning’,” *The Star*, September 26, 2013. Online at <http://www.allafrica.com/stories/201309271168.html>; Also see: David McKenzie and Antonia Mortensen, “Kenyan intelligence warned of Al-Shabaab threat before mall attack,” CNN, September 30, 2013 <https://www.cnn.com/2013/09/28/world/africa/kenya-mall-attack/index.html>
123. Isaac Ongiri, “This is why Michael Gichangi had to go,” *Daily Nation*, August 15, 2014. Online at <https://www.nation.co.ke/news/This-is-why-Michael-Gichangi-had-to-go/1056-2420600-ok5k2k/index.html>
124. “Kenya appoints new intelligence chief amid rising Shabaab threat,” *Reuters*, September 11, 2014. Online at <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-kenya-security/kenya-appoints-new-intelligence-chief-amid-rising-shabaab-threat-idUSKBN0H61T620140911>
125. Brian Walker and Merieme Arif, “Al-Shabaab separates non-Muslims from Muslims, kills 36 in quarry attack,” CNN, December 2, 2014. Online at <https://www.cnn.com/2014/12/02/world/africa/kenya-attack/index.html>
126. “Kenya attack: 147 dead in Garissa University assault,” BBC, April 3, 2015. Online at <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-32169080>
127. David Mwere, “Kenya: Terror Groups Pose Biggest Threat to Kenya’s Security - NIS,” *Daily Nation*, September 20, 2017. Online at <http://allafrica.com/stories/201709200081.html>
128. Jina Moore, “Uhuru Kenyatta Is Declared Winner of Kenya’s Repeat Election,” *New York Times*, October 30, 2017. Online at <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/30/world/africa/kenya-election-kenyatta-odinga.html>
129. “Kenya election: Kenyatta vows to overcome divisions,” BBC, November 28, 2017. Online at <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-42146754>
130. Joseph Ndunda, “KDF, NIS officers take training on preventing violence during poll,” *The Star*, June 20, 2017. Online at [https://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2017/06/20/kdf-nis-officers-take-training-on-preventing-violence-during-poll\\_c1582896](https://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2017/06/20/kdf-nis-officers-take-training-on-preventing-violence-during-poll_c1582896)
131. Rawlings Otieno, “Raila: National Intelligence Service interfering with voter registration to influence election results,” *The Standard*, January 25, 2017. Online at <https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/article/2000231133/raila-national-intelligence-service-interfering-with-voter-registration-to-influence-election-results>
132. Samwel Owin, “Raila alleges there is rigging plot involving 42 police officers,” *Daily Nation*, July 20, 2017. Online at <https://www.nation.co.ke/news/politics/raila-alleges-police-rigging-plot-involving-officers/1064-4025400-1mov0gz/index.html>
133. Joseph Muraya, “Kenya: Boinnet Asks Odinga to Get Facts Right on Officers, Not See Rigging Everywhere,” *Capitol FM*, July 22, 2017. Online at <https://www.capitalfm.co.ke/news/2017/07/boinnet-asks-raila-to-get-facts-right-on-officers-not-see-rigging-everywhere/>
134. Nancy Agutu, Ernest Cornel and Melanie Mwangi, “I’m ready for lifestyle audit, no crisis in ODM – Raila,” *The Star*, June 18, 2018. Online at [https://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2018/06/18/im-ready-for-lifestyle-audit-no-crisis-in-odm-raila\\_c1774308](https://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2018/06/18/im-ready-for-lifestyle-audit-no-crisis-in-odm-raila_c1774308)
135. Felix Olick, “NIS dossiers drive Uhuru’s war on graft,” *The Star*, June 4, 2018. Online at [https://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2018/06/04/nis-dossiers-drive-uhurus-war-on-graft\\_c1767489](https://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2018/06/04/nis-dossiers-drive-uhurus-war-on-graft_c1767489)
136. Kibati, *Memoirs*, 233–37.
137. *Ibid.*, 264.
138. *Ibid.*, 264.
139. *Ibid.*, 236.
140. “Raila Odinga: My eyes are tearing because of the torture I got at Nyayo House chambers,” YouTube, July 24, 2017. Online at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rD-OVSiC1pc>



**Secret Operations of World War II**

Alexander Stillwell (Amber Books, 2018), 224 pp., bibliography, index.

**Reviewed by David A. Foy**

---

Students of World War II espionage and sabotage are familiar with the legendary exploits of such entities as America's OSS and Britain's SOE. As the brief new book by Alexander Stillwell points out, however, other nations involved in the global conflict had their own such organizations, no less heroic, though generally less heralded. The author attempts to fill this void with *Secret Operations of World War II*, subtitled *The Clandestine Battle Fought Across Occupied Countries by the SOE, OSS, Maquis, Partisans and Resistance Fighters*.

Stillwell begins his account with a discussion of British secret operations during the war, covering familiar ground with a survey of SOE, SIS, and Jedburgh teams, making the point that given the Nazi blitzkrieg that overran Europe and left Britain essentially on its own from 1939 to 1941, only by resorting to special operations could the United Kingdom affect the war on the continent in its early days. He also notes that US intervention following the Pearl Harbor attack allowed for more extensive special operations, especially in the pre- and post-D-Day period.

He then turns his attention to US secret operations, rehearsing well-known accounts to US intelligence officers and historians—the uneven cooperation between OSS and SOE, the new technology developed during the war (e.g., the Liberator pistol, the Joan-Eleanor communications system), the contributions of women in OSS, Allen Dulles and Operation Sunrise (which led to the early surrender of German forces in Italy), and a brief mention of the actions of Detachments 101 and 202 in the Far East.

As expected, Stillwell devotes a sizable part of his book to the French contribution to special operations during the war. He notes that the British were cooperating with French Resistance groups as early as 1941, the exploits of several of which he describes, such as Gilbert Renault (Col. Remy) and the 1,300-member Notre Dame Brotherhood, which provided the British with information to help locate the German battleship *Bismarck*. He discusses the Maquis, the young French men who joined

the Resistance, primarily to avoid the Service du Travail Obligatoire (German forced labor) and the despised Milice, the collaborationist French security service the Vichy Regime created with German support in January 1943. The author discusses the well-known and vicious Nazi reprisal in Oradour-sur-Glane following the Maquis kidnapping of a German Panzergrenadier officer. In retaliation, a German SS unit gathered the men of the town into barns, where they were all killed, and the women and children into the church, where they, too, were shot, and the barns and the church set ablaze. At the end of the carnage, 642 French citizens had been killed. In the aftermath of the Normandy invasion, the Forces Francaises de l'Interieur (French Forces of the Interior—FFI) were formed to bring order to the disparate French Resistance groups, which Stillwell characterizes as filled with undisciplined free spirits with blurred loyalties. Gen. Charles De Gaulle summarily declared that all Resistance leaders were now officially French Army soldiers, allowing him to claim that the French Army had continued to fight the Germans throughout the entire occupation. In summarizing the accomplishments of the French Resistance writ large, Stillwell makes the questionable assertion that their attacks deprived the Germans the use of 50 percent of the rail network in France.

In the subsequent chapters, readers are most likely to encounter new material on the subject of secret forces during World War II, lending the book a particular significance. During the course of the war, Belgium would serve a key role as a route to safety, first for soldiers escaping from Dunkirk and later for downed Allied airmen, such as the 400 who were returned to US and British control via the Comet Line. Stillwell highlights the thriving underground press in Belgium, the pre-D-Day sabotage activities of Groupe G, and the activities of L'Armee Secrete, the Secret Army formed shortly after the 1940 Belgian surrender to the Germans. In an interesting aside, Stillwell credits Belgian Minister of Justice-in-exile Victor de Laveleye with the inspiration for one of the most familiar images from the war, the “V-for-Victory” symbol,

---

All statements of fact, opinion, or analysis expressed in this article are those of the author. Nothing in the article should be construed as asserting or implying US government endorsement of its factual statements and interpretations.

---

intended to serve as a visible reminder to the enemy of his inevitable defeat.

To the north, the Netherlands' ability to field 20 divisions was impressive but still outmatched by German forces, especially since the Dutch territory was occupied by the SS vice the Wehrmacht. Here Catholic, Jewish, and Protestant resistance groups sprang up, and readers encounter the familiar stories of the Frank family and Corrie Ten Boom's hiding of Jews and Resistance members. Stillwell also explains in detail the disaster that befell Dutch secret operations after a Dutch Resistance member was captured and attempted to warn London, a critical signal missed by the Dutch N Section at SOE, which continued to send multiple agents and supplies that immediately fell into German hands. The scope of the disaster was such that SIS began warning its operatives to stay away from their SOE rivals as a security measure. Stillwell concludes this chapter with an interesting discussion of the activity of Dutch Scouts during Operation Market Garden. The entire organization resisted integration into the Dutch equivalent of the Hitler Youth, the followers of British Scouts founder Lord Baden-Powell instead choosing to join the Resistance. One such member, Jan van Hoof, met US paratroopers in his scouting uniform and provided them the detailed notes and drawings he had made, showing German bridge defenses in the area. He reportedly was able to cut the wires to the Nijmegen Bridge that was about to be blown—only to be wounded in combat a short time later and then killed by the Germans.

Not long after the German invasion of Poland, the country was divided between Germany and the Soviet Union. Poland never officially surrendered, and an underground resistance movement formed immediately, though distance limited SOE support to the besieged country. Poles created a government-in-exile, first in France, then in London, and the Polish resistance movement was credited with saving more Jewish lives than any other Allied organization during the war. The cost of resistance was the highest in Poland—when the 100,000 occupants of the Warsaw Ghetto struck back at the German occupiers in 1944, 16,000 died in the fighting, and the Germans executed 200,000 more in reprisals.

Alarmed by the 1938 Anschluss between Germany and Austria, the Czechs constructed more than 10,000 pillboxes and blockhouses to fend off German attacks, but

they proved illusory defenses given the prevailing spirit of appeasement, which dissuaded their British and French allies from coming to their defense. This chapter alone makes the book worth reading, as it provides a detailed account of Operation Anthropoid, the Czech Resistance plot to assassinate SS-Obergruppenführer Reinhard Heydrich, a key figure in the development of the Holocaust. The account of Staff Sgt Jan Kubis and WO Joseph Gabcik is one of bravery mixed with jammed weapons and improvisation.

In contrast to the situation in Poland, the population of Denmark surrendered to the Germans shortly after the April 1940 invasion. Despite the fact that SOE dropped agents into Denmark as early as December 1942, the Germans took complete control of the Danish government by August of the following year. An interesting side story in this chapter is the Royal Air Force raid, suggested by the Danish Resistance, to destroy Gestapo records in a building at Aarhus University, reasoning that if the records were destroyed, the Gestapo would not know whom to arrest, enabling the Resistance to operate more effectively.

Thanks to a supply of critical natural resources and a determined Resistance movement that began immediately, the situation in Norway was arguably more critical than that in other European countries. The port city of Narvik had access to a sizable supply of iron ore, of strategic significance to the Allies and to Germany alike. The Germans were able to occupy the country before the Allies could act, and when the British did invade, they were rebuffed by German military might, which eventually reached 300,000 troops. A particularly critical target for the Norwegian Resistance was the Norsk Hydro Plant in Vemork, where the "heavy water" required for atomic development was produced. Several efforts were required, most notably Operation Gunnerside—the second such attempt—before production was brought to a halt and the critical stockpile destroyed.

In Italy, the September 1943 armistice with the Allies prompted the creation of a joint resistance effort by the National Liberation Committee. The Communist Garibaldi Brigades represented nearly 50 percent of the Resistance in Italy and worked with a variety of Allied entities, including SOE, the British Special Air Service, OSS, and British Directorate of Military Intelligence Section 9 (MI9), which provided support to the Resistance in

returning downed airmen to Britain, and US counterpart MIS-X. In July 1944, the Allied Central Commission organized a Patriots Branch to handle relations with the Resistance. When Allied armies ran into stiff resistance on the Gothic Line in northern Italy, they instructed Resistance members to stand down until the Allied advance could begin again, to the annoyance of Resistance members. In a book filled with examples of heroes who paid the ultimate price, readers will be especially drawn to the story of the Cerri family, whose seven sons were all shot by the Germans due to the father's resistance activities.

Stillwell characterizes resistance activities in the Balkans (Yugoslavia, Greece, Turkey, Romania) as "complex and often mutually antagonistic," a situation that proved challenging for the British and American elements attempting to work with them beginning in May 1943. In Yugoslavia, British authorities were impressed with the Communist Chetniks of Josep Broz, aka Tito, but he was suspicious of the British and kept them at arm's length. Compounding the situation was the Chetniks' fractious relationship with the other major resistance group, the Mihailovic Royalists. As Stillwell notes, the Chetniks proved more interested in using their Allied-supplied weapons against the royalists than the German occupiers.

Turning to the resistance network in the Soviet Union, Stillwell reminds readers of the size and impact of Operation Barbarossa, in which 4 million Axis troops and 600,000 vehicles swept across the Russian steppes. Although repeatedly warned, Stalin was in denial, and no one dared contradict him. However, after absorbing the initial shock, the Soviet High Command used partisan forces to disrupt German communications and supplies. Russian partisans, including the 53 divisions of NKVD troops under the command of Lavrenti Beria, worked together in support of Russian military operations.

Stillwell concludes his slim volume with a look at German secret operations during the war, noting that they were dispersed among the Wehrmacht, Luftwaffe, Kriegsmarine, and the SS. He notes the codebreaking

prowess of the Army High Command Chiffrierabteilung under William Fenner but concludes that the record for the Abwehr was "mixed," with few of its five departments as successful as their British and American counterparts. Stillwell notes in passing Operation Eiche (Otto Skorzeny's commando raid to free Mussolini from partisans), Operation Greif (in which Nazi troops masqueraded as US troops during the Battle of the Bulge), the failed Operation Pastorius (the Abwehr's attempt to infiltrate spies and saboteurs into wartime America), and the Duquesne Spy Ring (a group of 33 German spies arrested, convicted, and sentenced to a collective 300 years in prison in January 1942).

Several characteristics of *Secret Operations of World War II* recommend it to readers. Although the book is overly brief, encyclopedic in nature, and geared for a secondary school audience, it does discuss secret operations in second-tier European countries that seldom make it into more standard works, rendering it a useful reference work. The author, who has written four other books on special forces, is also to be commended for including previously-unknown photographs, liberally dispersed throughout the book, making it a treat for the eyes.

Readers should be aware, however, that this is a British-published book, written by an author from across the pond, which explains the list of primarily British works in the overly-brief bibliography (18 books, no other references). The sparse index is of limited value, and readers will find themselves encountering UK spellings ("tyre" for "tire") and referring to unabridged dictionaries to discover the meaning of such unfamiliar (to US audiences) terms as "cosh" (on page 39, a blackjack), "feluccas" (on page 41, a multi-masted Mediterranean sailing ship), and "gilets" (on page 83, waistcoats). The book ends abruptly, as does the text in each chapter, with limited-to-no introductions, conclusions, or transitions. Still, for readers who want to know more about such topics as the multi-national Balkan Air Force that flew 15 different types of planes to support Yugoslav and Italian partisans during the war, this is a useful volume.



*David A. Foy* is the Intelligence Community historian on the History Staff of the Center for the Study of Intelligence. He is a frequent contributor of book reviews.





***The Spy and the Traitor: The Greatest Espionage Story of the Cold War***

Ben MacIntyre (Crown, 2018), 358 pp., map, codenames and aliases, references, bibliography, index.

**Reviewed by David A. Foy**

---

The sudden change of the music confirmed that he was now safely out of the clutches of the KGB—instead of the “horrible, horrible music” (294), as Oleg Gordievsky described the *Greatest Hits of Dr. Hook*—the defecting KGB colonel and devotee of classical music now heard from his hiding spot in the car trunk the enchanting notes of Jean Sibelius’ *Finlandia* coming from the cassette deck. With that, Gordievsky knew, finally, that he had made his escape from the Soviet Union—with the considerable help of his MI6 handlers and support from the Danish service. It was July 1985, and Gordievsky, recruited by the British foreign intelligence service in 1973, had been delivering high-grade intelligence to his handlers for more than 11 years.

As veteran intelligence author Ben MacIntyre notes, Gordievsky’s father was a career KGB officer, which meant a life of privilege and relative ease, at least by Soviet standards. Young Oleg never seriously considered doing anything else but joining the “family business,” describing the KGB as “an exclusive club to join—and an impossible one to leave.” (8) He joined the KGB in 1962, which also employed his older brother, Vasili, who was training to be an “illegal” in Directorate S. Young Oleg was assigned to the Soviet Embassy in Copenhagen, Denmark, with the job of supporting “illegals” in the country. Despite being an outwardly loyal KGB officer, Gordievsky was soon disillusioned by the secret knowledge of the West he had accumulated, partly through his love of classical music (forbidden in the Soviet Union), and partly his shock at the nature and extent of Soviet repression in Hungary and later in Czechoslovakia. In sharp contrast, Gordievsky found Denmark very much to his liking, commenting “. . . I could only look back on the vast, sterile concentration camp of the Soviet Union as a form of hell.” (27)

Meanwhile, the small but efficient Danish security service became increasingly convinced that Gordievsky was a KGB officer, rather than a bonafide diplomat. As they already knew, only six of the 20 Soviet personnel

assigned to the Copenhagen embassy were actual diplomats, the other 14 being either KGB or GRU officers. When his university running buddy and intellectual confidant, Standa Kaplan—studying to be a Russian military translator—defected, the latter mentioned his friend’s disillusionment, and Gordievsky was immediately flagged as a “person of interest” to MI6, which codenamed him “SUNBEAM.” Gordievsky rotated back to the Soviet Union in January 1970, struck by “how shabby everything seemed.” (35)

Within the next two years, Vasili had drunk himself to death and died a KGB hero, and Gordievsky married, returning to Copenhagen in 1972 with his new wife and his new rank of major. The next step in this developing dance occurred when Gordievsky was visited by legendary MI6 figure Richard Bromhead and then by Kaplan, whom Oleg suspected was dispatched to recruit him. Shortly before Bromhead was reassigned, Gordievsky told him that he had not reported their meeting to the KGB—the prelude to SUNBEAM’s becoming a formal MI6 recruit. The British service would run their promising asset, notably without informing the CIA of its new-found treasure. Predictably, the British started with the presumption that such a high-ranking figure as Gordievsky had to be a dangle, only to conclude after various tests that he was a legitimate asset. The issue then became the one that would preoccupy the attention of MI6 for the next decade—how to use the high-grade intelligence SUNBEAM was providing without burning its prized source.

The subject was never far from Gordievsky’s mind, either. As he began supplying the British service with KGB documents to copy and microfilm, he requested an exfiltration plan from MI6. In an exemplar that would prove to be of critical importance later, MI6 decided that evacuation by car to the Finnish border would be the best option, and thus was born PIMLICO, the code-name for Gordievsky’s extraction plan should it ever prove necessary. The British service offered Gordievsky the oppor-

---

All statements of fact, opinion, or analysis expressed in this article are those of the author. Nothing in the article should be construed as asserting or implying US government endorsement of its factual statements and interpretations.

---

tunity to defect at any time, but Oleg never seriously considered accepting the offer. Meanwhile, several MI6 officers involved in PIMLICO regularly practiced executing the escape plan, down to the smallest detail, to ensure that it would be ready to implement on a moment's notice.

To the delight of MI6, a vacancy appeared at the Russian embassy in London for an English-speaking diplomatic officer, and Gordievsky was selected, though he was not finally cleared to travel to the United Kingdom until June 1982. Once he made contact again with MI6, SUNBEAM—now NOCTON—was introduced to his new case officer, “Jack” (James Spooner). For the next three months, Gordievsky provided the British with the largest “take” of intelligence information in MI6's history. Gordievsky provided several startling revelations, including that the KGB was “flawed, clumsy, inefficient” (138) and that the Kremlin leadership was absolutely convinced that the West was about to launch a surprise nuclear attack on the Soviet Union in 1982–83, the premise behind Operation RYAN.

Notably, MI6 began dribbling out such information to CIA though never divulging the source. Ironically, as Oleg's stock with MI6 rose sharply, his Moscow Center superiors were increasingly dissatisfied with him—in short, Gordievsky was floundering at his job. His MI6 minders launched a two-pronged effort to salvage his career—and his value to them as a source. First, they removed obstacles to his career progression, such as Line PR chief Igor Titov, who was PNG'd in March 1983 and replaced by Gordievsky—now promoted to lieutenant colonel. Before long, two other superiors were similarly removed, and the position of rezident of the London embassy was dangled in front of Oleg's eyes. Second, MI6 realized that Gordievsky needed to provide valuable information to please his Moscow mentors and so began feeding him “genuine, though valueless” (156) information.

Meanwhile, Burton Gerber, the head of Soviet operations at CIA, was increasingly annoyed that he did not know the identity of MI6's highly-placed spy and launched an investigation to answer that vexing question. Regretably, that task was given to Aldrich Ames, described by MacIntyre as “part of the furniture at the CIA, tatty but familiar.” (201) By March 1985, he had identified Gordievsky as the KGB spy the Agency now referred to as TICKLE. Gordievsky was due to take over as the

official London rezident at the end of April 1985; 12 days before, Ames had volunteered to work for the KGB.

While it seems likely Ames told the KGB about Gordievsky in their initial meeting, it is not clear if he knew his name at the time. In response, the KGB launched the largest manhunt in its history to locate the British mole. Col. Viktor Budanov, head of Directorate K (Counter-intelligence), reputedly “the most dangerous man in the KGB,” knew a mole existed, likely in the London rezidentura, but Gordievsky was not the only suspect. Three months after taking charge in London, Gordievsky was recalled to Moscow, prompting MI6 to ponder the reason—belated congratulations, or a trap? Despite the potential danger, Gordievsky opted to return on 19 May 1985, with MI6 reassuring him that if it went bad, Operation PIMLICO was in place, ready for activation.

What began as a fairly civil meeting quickly devolved into a brutal interrogation, aided by spiked brandy. Gordievsky's second wife, Leila—daughter of a KGB general—and their two daughters were sent back to Moscow, causing panic in MI6. On 13 June, Ames named 25 spies working against the Soviet Union, including Gordievsky. However, rather than facing relentless interrogation followed by a bullet to the back of the head, Gordievsky was somewhat surprised to instead be sent to a state-run sanatorium for senior officials for a period of rest and relaxation, though he was still under heavy surveillance.

Following his “enforced vacation” and return to his family, Gordievsky decided that, in order to survive, he had to escape. But should he take Leila and his daughters, now ages five and three, with him? As he agonized over what to do, Gordievsky realized that while he loved Leila, he did not entirely trust her and, as MacIntyre puts it, “in one part of his heart, he feared her” (247); “Leila was still KGB. And he was not.” (193) When he tested her on her willingness to flee, she responded coldly, “Don't be idiotic,” (249) giving Gordievsky the answer he expected but dreaded hearing. After a nervous missed brush pass, he was finally able to leave this message for MI6—“AM UNDER STRONG SUSPICION AND IN BAD TROUBLE, NEED EXFILTRATION SOONEST. BEWARE OF RADIOACTIVE DUST AND CAR ACCIDENTS.” (250) In response, the British service implemented Operation PIMLICO, which required the personal approval of Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher—who

never learned that the operation she approved was already underway.

Committed to escaping, Gordievsky was savvy enough to convince all his friends and colleagues in Moscow in every way possible that he was not going anywhere, accepting social commitments he never intended to keep. Meanwhile, his MI6 team made preparations for his escape, which would involve a road trip from Moscow to Leningrad, Finland, Norway, and then to the United Kingdom. Somewhat astoundingly, the KGB did not immediately realize Gordievsky had fled—as MacIntyre notes, even when they did start looking for him, they did so “with no particular urgency.” After a nerve-racking trip starting Friday, 19 July, Gordievsky—unceremoniously stuffed in a car trunk in his underwear, with a heat-shielding blanket to avoid detection by border guard search dogs—crossed the Finnish border on Sunday morning, 21 July. Once he arrived in Britain, he was spirited to the MI6 training base at Ft. Monckton, where he spent the next four months being debriefed. A week after NOCTON—now known as OVATION—reached the safety of the United Kingdom, 25-year-veteran KGB general Vitaliy Yurchenko defected in Rome, only to redefect within four months, though having confirmed Gordievsky’s bona fides along the way.

MI6 now confirmed Gordievsky’s identity to CIA, letting its intelligence cousin know that the inside information on Project RYAN had come from him. Among Gordievsky’s numerous visitors at Ft. Monckton was DCI William Casey, who asked Oleg for advice on what President Reagan should say in his first meeting with Premier Mikhail Gorbachev. Notably, Gordievsky told the DCI that continued US emphasis on the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) would ruin the Soviet leadership and bankrupt the country, a cogent piece of analysis.

With Gordievsky now safe, the focus turned to reuniting him with his wife and daughters, an undertaking known to MI6 as Operation HETMAN, which would take a grueling six years to complete. Still in Moscow, Leila had lost her job and apartment, was under virtual house arrest, and had changed the children’s last names. Subtle British queries about getting them out of Russia were dismissed out of hand by the Soviets, and ultimately

the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union each expelled 31 suspected intelligence officers as part of the fallout. In November 1985, Gordievsky was tried in absentia by a military tribunal, found guilty of treason, and condemned to death. As part of his resettlement, Gordievsky was living in a house bought for him by MI6, using an assumed name, while writing books with historian Christopher Andrew and having audiences with Prime Minister Thatcher as well as President Reagan at the White House. Possibly in response to diplomatic pressure, the KGB told Leila that if she would divorce Oleg, her property would be returned—which she did, reverting to her maiden name in the process. The ultimately successful reunion, however, likely owed more to the failed Soviet putsch of 1991, which prompted a change in KGB leadership. In September, the new (and last) KGB director, Vadim Bakatin, agreed to free Leila and the girls, who then flew to London to rejoin Oleg. Three months later, the Soviet Union dissolved and, two years later, so did the marriage of Oleg and Leila, who parted in 1993 and never saw each other again.

Readers of *The Spy and the Traitor* will find it difficult to put it down, as MacIntyre tells a compelling story in masterful fashion, though the subtitle “The Greatest Espionage Story of the Cold War” is likely to stimulate spirited discussion. Those who are either in or familiar with the intelligence profession will also be struck by some of the author’s observations about the craft, such as “secrecy is seductive” (16) and the discomfiting observation that “Espionage attracts more than its share of the damaged, the lonely, and the plain weird.” (61) MacIntyre is also adept at portraying human foibles and fears, especially in his discussion of the implementation of PIMLICO and the tense relationship between Oleg and Leila, and in withering descriptions, such as his rather shallow characterization of James Angleton as the Agency’s “cadaverous, orchid-collecting CI chief.” (125) *The Spy and the Traitor* is profusely illustrated and enhanced by a map showing the route of PIMLICO, a list of code names and aliases, a select bibliography, and a detailed index. Although MacIntyre’s volume is the only biography of Gordievsky, Oleg’s autobiography—*Next Stop Execution: The Autobiography of Oleg Gordievsky* appeared in 2015 and would make a good complement to the fascinating story of this “spy and traitor.”





***Beirut Rules: The Murder of a CIA Station Chief and Hezbollah's War Against America***

Fred Burton and Samuel M. Katz (Berkley, 2018), 400 pp., endnotes, index.

***Reviewed by Brent G.***

---

The story of William F. Buckley, a CIA officer and Special Forces veteran who was kidnapped and murdered in Lebanon in the 1980s, deserves to be told and told well. He lived a life of duty and service to his country and accepted a posting to one of the most dangerous places on Earth, Beirut, with the full knowledge that he would be targeted by any number of groups then waging war there. His predecessor as CIA station chief there died, along with dozens of others—including 16 other Americans—when a suicide bomber drove a massive truck bomb into the US Embassy on 18 April 1983. *Beirut Rules*, by Fred Burton and Samuel M. Katz, is the first serious effort to chronicle Buckley's life and death in a book, and the authors deserve credit for identifying the need and for the research they conducted to that end, including interviews with his family, friends, and former colleagues.

Regrettably, Burton and Katz also seek with this book to tell a wider story about the rise of Lebanon's Hezbollah organization, its subsequent conflict with the United States and Israel, and add various storylines to their narrative. In so expanding their scope, they too often substitute breadth of analysis for depth and rigor. To make matters worse, they repeatedly turn to breathless prose that is more appropriate for a (bad) spy novel than a nonfiction examination of deadly serious issues, cheapening subject matter that needs no embellishment. Adding further insult, the book is riddled with distracting blacked-out-line redactions from CIA security reviewers.<sup>a</sup> These make for difficult reading in several instances. Moreover, the authors often fail to adequately source or justify their assertions. The result is a book long on intentions—covering four decades of history—and disappointingly short on substance or information new to specialists or even generalists with a good grasp of recent Middle East history.

---

a. This technique of identifying redacted portions was pioneered in the 1974 book, *CIA and the Cult of Intelligence* by Victor Marchetti and John D. Marks (Knopf, 1974, and revised edition by Dell, 1980). The device has been used by numerous authors since, most recently by Anthony Shaffer in *Operation Dark Heart* (St. Martin's Press, 2010).

In some areas, especially the chapters on Buckley's life leading up to his kidnapping and a chapter on fellow hostage US Marine Col. William "Rich" Higgins—whom Hezbollah also eventually murdered—Burton and Katz provide welcome new information to the literature of the hostage-taking era in Lebanon in the 1980s and 1990s. This is especially true of the details about Buckley the man. Recollections of friends and family detailed aspects of his personality and humanize Buckley in a way that makes his story more tragic and adds greater meaning for a life given for his country. Likewise, certain details about the deployment of US Marines to Lebanon and the October 1983 bombing of the Marine barracks that killed 241 servicemen are new to this reviewer and contribute to a better understanding of those events.

Another relative strength of this book are the descriptions of Hezbollah master terrorist Imad Mughniyeh and, to a lesser extent, his brother-in-law and fellow terrorist leader Mustafa Badreddine. Although poorly sourced, these sections offer some insight into the lives and motivations of two men who became Hezbollah's top field commanders and a few fascinating details, such as a chance meeting between a teenage Mughniyeh and future Israeli Mossad Director Meir Dagan in southern Lebanon in 1982 (29). But even here, the reader is left wanting more. Too often, these key figures are described in the starkest terms as ruthless and bloodthirsty—which they were—but little more, and little that is sourced.

The near total lack of sourcing is a major flaw. Time and again, the authors either state as fact assertions for which they provide no evidence or take artistic license with details. Because Burton served in the region while with the State Department, it is entirely possible he is relaying information as he learned it at the time or as he remembered it, but readers are left to guess which details are the truth and which are embellishments intended to add zest to the narrative. The examples are almost too numerous to mention. Here are two. How, for example, do the authors know that Iranian operative Ali Reza Asgari had a space heater in his office in Lebanon? (35) From what source do they learn

that Mughniyeh earned a reputation for ruthlessness as a young sniper, “picking off Christian housewives as they tried to return home from the market”? (27)

Too often, the authors’ crafting of graphic, visceral language either blind them—or their editors—to stark lapses in argumentation or are used to mask them. For example, they recklessly lump together two of the most prominent players in the Lebanese civil war in the early 1980s, Bashir Gemayal and Ali Hassan Salameh, two young men the authors argue, convincingly, had much in common. However, Burton and Katz then imply that Palestinian terrorist Salameh, like Gemayal, received “millions of dollars” (16) from the CIA—again, unsourced. Other authors, most notably journalist Kai Bird in his excellent book *The Good Spy*, have described Salameh’s contact with the CIA as backchannel communications, but none—to this reviewer’s knowledge—have claimed that Salameh was in CIA’s employ, let alone for “millions of dollars.” A careful reading of Bird’s book, which Burton and Katz cite, reveals that, according to Bird’s sources, CIA tried and failed to put Salameh on its payroll. Because Burton and Katz fail to follow up their claim with evidence, it is more likely they simply made a sloppy error rather than introduce something new.

Perhaps the most egregious examples of the emphasis on style over substance begins on page 152, where the authors launch into their examination of Bill Buckley’s interrogations and torture, which they claimed was “definitely an Iranian endeavor.” Just two pages later, however, they assert that the “knuckle-dragging men from the south [members of Hezbollah] . . . were the muscle that punished Buckley.” This apparent contradiction goes unnoticed and unaddressed in subsequent passages, and neither assertion came with a footnote. It is worth noting, though, that at this same point in the book, the authors choose to embellish the horrors that Buckley undoubtedly suffered with the following memorable flourish: “Buckley’s resil-

ience had to be shattered; his resolve required disassembly, one punch to the gut and one kick to the head at a time.” This reviewer found this particular passage tasteless and, sadly, not unique. Other examples include a reference to slain American professor Malcolm Kerr on page 125: “Later that day, as Kerr’s blood was being mopped up from the marble floors. . . .” If the authors intend in this way to illustrate the extreme violence done to Buckley and Kerr, their choices of words only glamorize it. To top it all off, the paragraph about Buckley ends with two redacted black lines of text, followed by still another trite, dime-novel construct that only dilutes the deadly serious subject matter: “The weather warmed in Ba’albek as the weeks passed. Buckley’s treatment worsened.” Truly, page 154 epitomizes all that is wrong with this book.

The shortcomings of this book are all the more disappointing because its authors have a wealth of experience in the fields of terrorism and security issues. Burton had been a State Department counterterrorism deputy chief and Diplomatic Security Service agent, and Katz is the author of more than 20 books on terrorism, special operations, and Middle East affairs. They co-authored a book on the 2012 Benghazi attack that received positive reviews as one of the best written on the subject.

In the final analysis, this collaboration reads like the authors set out to focus entirely on Buckley, failed to collect enough material for a book, and haphazardly slapped in material that has been done better by others. See, for example, Ronen Bergman’s fine 2018 book on Israel’s antiterrorism operations, *Rise and Kill First*. Burton and Katz themselves cite Bergman’s work liberally.

Bill Buckley deserves a good book about his life and sacrifice, as does the larger history of Hezbollah’s kidnapping of Western hostages and terrorist attacks and the resultant US responses. Until one comes along, however, we will have to settle for *Beirut Rules*.



**Brent G.** is a member of the History Staff of the Center for the Study of Intelligence.

***The Battle of Arnhem: The Deadliest Airborne Operation of World War II***

Antony Beevor (Viking, 2018), 480 pp., illustrations, glossary, maps, bibliography, notes, index.

**Reviewed by Leslie C.**

---

That no plan survives being set into motion is axiomatic. That the enemy gets a vote is a cliché. Both nevertheless apply to Operation Market Garden, the disastrous September 1944 British, American, and Polish attempt to use airborne troops to seize bridges over the Maas, Waal, and Lower Rhine Rivers in eastern Holland, well behind German lines. The paratroopers were to hold their objectives until ground forces could arrive after traversing more than 100 kilometers of enemy-held territory via a single narrow highway. Had it succeeded, the coup would have sealed off the German XV Army's escape while opening a route into the vital Ruhr region, accelerating the collapse of Nazi arms in the West. That it failed, and why, is the subject of Antony Beevor's *The Battle of Arnhem: The Deadliest Airborne Operation of World War II*.

Beevor is a popular historian who has written best-selling and prize-winning accounts of the Battle for Stalingrad, Operation Overlord, and the Battle of the Bulge, among others. The pleasure of reading a well-crafted history notwithstanding, a casual reader might be tempted to ask, why another book on the European theater of operations? An intelligence officer might inquire of its professional relevance. The answer is that careful reading into what is a compelling episode in its own right offers insight into the assessment and use of intelligence, managing liaison relationships, and examining assumptions as a *sine qua non* of effective planning.

*The Battle of Arnhem* follows the Irish journalist Cornelius Ryan's 1974 *A Bridge Too Far*, and the eponymous 1977 film featuring an all-star cast. Ryan's book re-examined a costly failure that previous accounts had either ignored or attempted to spin, primarily in an effort to absolve its architect, Gen. Bernard Law Montgomery. Beevor is more unsparing, stating early that, "Many historians, with an 'if only' approach to the British defeat, have focused so much on different aspects of Operation Market Garden which went wrong that they have tended

to overlook the central element. It was quite simply a very bad plan right from the start and right from the top." (36)

This review is not the place to offer a blow-by-blow summary of the operation; Beevor's narrative does excellent service in that respect. Suffice it to say that—as a number of Market Garden's veterans observed during and after the fighting—everything that could have gone wrong did. In a concession to Troop Carrier Command's fears of flak around the bridges, the drop zones were too far from the objectives, costing the paratroopers their only advantages of timing and surprise. The German response was more rapid and complete than Allied planners anticipated. The single road to the bridges was insufficient for its intended purpose and too easy to stress or cut with counterattacks. In the end, the Germans surrounded and destroyed the British 1<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division in Arnhem—the site of the "bridge too far" across the Lower Rhine—while the American 82<sup>nd</sup> and 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Divisions, together with the British XXX Corps' armored units, engaged in heavy fighting to secure the other objectives and in an effort to force the road open. Allied troops were unable to liberate a thoroughly wrecked Arnhem until spring 1945, and then only long after Allied bombers had destroyed the bridge British paratroopers died to secure.

Allied intelligence on the eve of the operation has been the subject of much subsequent argument. Planners were aware from aerial reconnaissance, reports from Dutch resistance, and SIGINT that elements of the II SS Panzer Corps were in the Arnhem area, but dismissed them as weakened shadows of their former selves. Market Garden was planned within the context of the German retreat in disarray from Normandy and north-central France, coupled with a US 3<sup>rd</sup> Army advance whose surprising speed after a summer of hard fighting in the bocage was governed more by the availability of fuel than a faltering German defense. Beevor shows that this unrealistic assessment was the product of wishful thinking, and of a desire to avoid discouraging the paratroopers that, with hindsight, seems cynical.

---

All statements of fact, opinion, or analysis expressed in this article are those of the author. Nothing in the article should be construed as asserting or implying US government endorsement of its factual statements and interpretations.

---

More difficult to comprehend was the planners' failure to anticipate the German response after five years of fighting. Even as the Germans were quitting France, the Wehrmacht and SS remained formidable formations that might be expected to renew the fight as the Allies approached German soil. Beevor notes, "What all those involved on the Allied side failed to grasp was the extraordinary ability of the German military machine to react with speed and determination. And the two panzer divisions, even in their weakened state, were able to form a nucleus on to which other, less experienced units could be grafted. . . . The vast majority of the tanks which Allied troops faced in Market Garden were not present at the start of the operation, but were brought in from Germany with astonishing speed", and in the face of Allied air superiority. (51)

Dealing with foreign liaison, which is a familiar challenge for intelligence officers, was a key element in the fatal environment of Market Garden. The infamous squabbling between Montgomery and his American counterparts over competing command visions and struggle for operational primacy and priority for limited supplies, especially fuel—which was Eisenhower's particular cross to bear—is not the issue here. Rather, the planners ignored Dutch input. While it may be understandable that the British did not trust the Dutch resistance because they assessed the Germans had penetrated it, far less justifiable was Montgomery's refusal "to listen to the Dutch commander-in-chief Prince Bernhard, who had warned him about the impossibility of deploying armored vehicles off the single raised road on the low-lying polderland

flood plain." (36) Worse, the planners pointedly did not consult Bernhard's staff. As Beevor writes, "The terrain and its difficulties were well known to them, as this very route constituted one of the key questions in their staff college exams. Any candidate who planned to advance from Nijmegen straight up the main road to Arnhem was failed on the spot, and this was exactly what the British were planning to do." (66) Likewise shameful was British commanders' shabby treatment of the Polish Independent Parachute Brigade and its commander, General Stanislaw Sosabowski, during and after the battle, which led to subsequent recrimination.

David Fraser, who fought at Nijmegen, concluded, "Operation Market Garden was, in an exact sense, futile. It was a thoroughly bad idea, badly planned and only—tragically—redeemed by the outstanding courage of those who executed it." (366) I cannot say if professional military education is as likely to conjure lessons from disaster as it is from triumph—Beevor observes that senior Allied commanders tried to forget about Market Garden, both immediately and after the war, in their memoirs. We, however, can still benefit. Examining implicit assumptions about the opposition, its capabilities, and intentions; consulting knowledgeable partners—the Dutch, in this instance; accepting accountability for outcomes, especially when doing so is difficult. All will contribute to a more effective intelligence organization. As for Beevor's well-researched and crafted book, I might question the title. Market Garden transcended just Arnhem, though it was there the consequences of Allied hubris in planning the operation came to their fullest fruition.



*Leslie C.* is a career CIA Directorate of Operations officer who has an interest in intelligence history.



**Vietnam: An Epic Tragedy, 1945–1975**

Max Hastings (Harper, 2018), 896 pp., glossary, maps, bibliography, notes, index.

**Reviewed by Leslie C.**

---

My graduate school professor, who served in Vietnam as an advisor to a South Vietnamese riverine patrol unit, liked to say that the history of the Vietnam War could not be written until the participants on both sides were dead. By this half-jest he meant that distance permits perspective. While the participants have not all passed from the scene, the gap grows; I was startled, when reading Mark Bowden's book on the Tet Offensive, to realize that 2018 marked the 50th anniversary of that seminal event.<sup>a</sup> In *Vietnam: An Epic Tragedy, 1945–1975*, Max Hastings shows that there is perspective enough—plus bibliography not available to his predecessors—to achieve a balance between traditional narratives of doomed Western hubris and revisionists who believe that America could have prevailed and South Vietnam survived. The lessons Hastings derives should be of interest to intelligence professionals. While hindsight makes such criticism seem easy, events subsequent to 1975 in Southwest Asia and elsewhere suggest it remains relevant.

It would be difficult to do justice to the breadth of the canvas Hastings has sketched in a brief essay. Let's dispense with what this book is not: an academic history based on interpretation derived from new archival research. Rather, it is synthesis for a general audience marked by Hastings's observations which, despite the familiarity of the material, are fresh because the author is an equal opportunity judge. None is spared: hawks, doves, communists, politicians, soldiers, anti-war activists—all fall under Hastings's scrutiny. And this is no screed of the sort the history of these events has too often generated; his criticisms are fair. Hastings fluently weaves together the experiences of ordinary people and those of decision-makers at the highest levels, also a hallmark of his writing on the last year of World War II in *Armageddon: The Battle for Germany, 1944–1945* (Knopf, 2004) and *Retri-*

*bution: The Battle for Japan, 1944–1945* (Knopf, 2008). Complexity and controversy are bound to this subject, and while *Vietnam* unfolds as a standard chronological narrative, what impresses most are the clarity of the author's assessments and the facility of his presentation.

A slew of inflection points emerges between 1945, when Ho Chi Minh declared Vietnam independent with US acquiescence, and the 1964 Tonkin Gulf Resolution, when Congress gave President Lyndon Johnson authority to wage war in Southeast Asia. The decision to back France's fight against Vietnamese nationalism; the debate surrounding the 1954 Dienbienphu debacle; the installation of Ngo Dinh Diem as president of the Republic of Vietnam; the gradual accretion of US advisors—Hastings dismisses as fantasy revisionist claims that President Kennedy intended to withdraw from Washington's commitment to Saigon; the disaster at Ap Bac, which exposed Saigon's military limitations; disaffection with Diem, culminating in his assassination during a coup; Kennedy's own assassination; and the elevation of Johnson—a tragic figure whose goals ran afoul of his inability to cope with an intractable conflict and rising domestic dissent.

One irony under which Johnson labored was containment of communism in Asia following the “loss” of China, when, as Hastings shows, both the USSR and China had scant interest in Vietnam. Their support—expressed in weapons, advisors, and propaganda—developed only gradually, and even then they were never enthusiastic backers of Hanoi's ambitions. The other was that the scale of the American effort, which marginalized the Saigon government and rendered South Vietnamese “outsiders in the struggle for their country” (210), legitimized Vietnamese communism.

The year 1964 was pivotal. Even with the “blank check” of the Tonkin Gulf Resolution, Johnson's landslide victory in that year's election was probably the last time he could have extricated the United States. After 1964, the war became increasingly destructive as opposition

---

a. Bowden's book, *Hue 1968: A Turning Point in the American War in Vietnam* (Atlantic Monthly Press, 2017) was reviewed by Thomas G. Coffey in the March 2018 issue of *Studies in Intelligence* (*Studies in Intelligence* 62, no. 1: 83–85).

---

All statements of fact, opinion, or analysis expressed in this article are those of the author. Nothing in the article should be construed as asserting or implying US government endorsement of its factual statements and interpretations.

---

mounted. The 16,000 advisors in 1963 became by 1968 more than 500,000 combat troops. Desultory bombing of North Vietnam initiated under Johnson to pressure Hanoi culminated in the 1972 “Linebacker” strikes under President Nixon to force Hanoi to make concessions at peace talks in Paris. None deterred—or likely ever could have deterred—the North Vietnamese politburo from its goal of unifying Vietnam by whatever means necessary. When the American effort peaked, Ho Chi Minh and Vo Nguyen Giap—though they remained beloved figures in the Vietnamese revolution—had been marginalized by harder men.

Hastings makes clear the utter Stalinist ruthlessness of Le Duan, to which the Tet Offensive of 1968 and its aftermath is a testament: by launching a doctrinaire attempt to foment an uprising, Le Duan exposed a heretofore elusive Southern insurgency to open battle and superior firepower. It never recovered, and the war developed a North Vietnamese face. Americans regard 1968 as the nadir, when in fact only America’s effort began winding down as political will sagged, with the American military suffering a “relentless decline” due to racial tension, drug use, and near-mutinous lack of motivation. (532) The war was more conventionally violent from then until its end in April 1975, with only one side committed to its preferred outcome.

America’s Vietnam nightmare had many components and Hastings offers insights on these. He dismisses the notion that vacillating politicians hamstrung the military, suggesting instead that its commanders “displayed naivete in failing to recognize that in all countries at all times, frustration with political leaders is the default posture of professional warriors, who are themselves almost invariably blessed with less wisdom than they suppose.” (207–8) Similarly, generals like General William Westmoreland were ill-equipped for anything other than a World War II-style straight ahead fight: “Soldiers observe wryly that the unique selling point of their profession is that they kill people. It is too much to ask of most, that they should resolve political and social challenges beyond their intellect, experience, conditioning, and resources.” (210) *Plus ça change . . .*

Politically, the root problem was deceit, and the serial decisions of policymakers to mislead the American people on what was done in their name and why. While this was evident early to those observing the antagonistic rela-

tionship between officialdom in Saigon and the US press corps, it was confirmed extensively with the subsequent leak of the Pentagon Papers. But self-lionizing journalists do not get a pass either, as Hastings shows that critics of the US effort, in the press and elsewhere, were willfully blind about the true nature of the Hanoi regime, feeding its built-in propaganda advantage. Hastings’s conclusion is apt: “The maxim obtains for all those who hold positions of authority, in war as in peace: lie to others if you must, but never to yourselves.” (165)

There is, for Hastings, a bottom line for the tragedy of Vietnam, and it is worth quoting at length because the principle is as valid now as it was then, and awareness of this calculation is useful for anyone engaged in the work of national security.

*The fatal error of the United States was to make an almost unlimited commitment to South Vietnam, where its real strategic interest was miniscule, when North Vietnam—the enemy—was content to stake all and faced no requirement to secure or renew popular consent. . . . The basis for a historical indictment of Lyndon Johnson’s decision is that he made his choices with a view to his own interests and those of his country, rather than those of the Vietnamese people. He showed himself blind to proportionality.”* (266)

Better still, Hastings’s acute observation on the antiwar movement also applies to the US effort in its entirety: “Americans will forgive almost anything but failure. The struggle tried beyond endurance the patience of the world’s greatest democracy. Many of its citizens turned sour not because their cause appeared morally wrong but instead because it seemed doomed. (386)

Hastings is British, which is notable only because Americans have written most of the standard histories, and he presents multiple perspectives—American, Vietnamese (North and South, military and civilian, guerrilla and regular), Australian, and of great interest, testimony from Chinese and Soviet advisors who served in North Vietnam and not infrequently under American bombs.

Hastings does not treat intelligence as a separate subject, though he does include accounts of practitioners, including Edward Lansdale, Lucien Conein, and William Colby, among others. He does not accept the cliché that Tet 1968 was an intelligence failure, noting that a CIA analyst in Saigon Station anticipated both the event and

its outcome based on abundant indicators, and he is more measured than most on the Phoenix Program, which usually gets one-dimensional treatment. His theme, rather, is that individual failures are beside the point when the whole enterprise was fatally flawed because it was built on a foundation of deceit and lacked any realistic appreciation of proportionality based on American strategic interests.

While not everyone will agree with Hastings's judgments, this root conclusion is difficult to deny. As the author styles the work an epic, some examination of the conflict's legacy—both culturally and in the “real” world—would have been welcome. The notion that America saw the ghost of Vietnam off in 1991 is facile, and if Hastings has accomplished anything with this book, it is to show that there is no survival value in self-deception.



*Leslie C.* is a career CIA Directorate of Operations officer who has an interest in intelligence history.



***The CIA and the Politics of US Intelligence Reform***

Brent Durbin (Cambridge University Press, 2017), 338 pp., notes, index.

***Reviewed by Michael Yerushalmi***

---

In *The CIA and the Politics of US Intelligence Reform*, Brent Durbin, a professor at Smith College, illuminates the political dynamics behind US intelligence reform, focusing on the Central Intelligence Agency and the interactions within and between Congress, the executive branch, and the permanent intelligence bureaucracy. Other scholars have examined these dynamics, but Durbin injects the subject with more methodological rigor and the lessons of contemporary case studies.

The author examines reform through the lenses of policy consensus and information control: when agreement among stakeholders regarding threats is high, Congress generally defers to the executive, but in periods of low consensus, key parties will use information control—including leaks—to foster or stifle reform. Thus, meaningful reform depends not only on consensus between members of two of the three branches of US government, but also on actors' ability to navigate disparities in access to information. Durbin employs historical process tracing, moving from the early years of US intelligence and the CIA's establishment, through the tumultuous late 1960s and early 1970s, and onto the changes in US intelligence after the Cold War and the aftermath of the al-Qa'ida terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001.

With its multiple, interlocking hypotheses and streams of argument, this is a complex book, tailored more to an academic readership. Still, Durbin ably weaves details since the CIA's establishment to tell the story of how and why intelligence reform efforts proceeded in times of policy consensus in comparison to times of contention. He has carefully mined the diplomatic record and key participants' memoirs in support of his case studies, although he could have made more use of the extensive literature published in intelligence journals such as this one.

As with earlier books on intelligence reform, the importance of key stakeholders is a thread running throughout. Some of the most insightful passages detail the struggles of strong personalities to change hidebound bureaucracies, or conversely, to stymie efforts toward

reform. From the very establishment of the CIA, key figures emerged to put their stamp on intelligence practices. Through "sheer force of personality," Walter Bedell Smith took on the role of CIA "drill master." (98) Despite objections from within, Smith was able to introduce rigorous training within the nascent organization. More broadly, though, high consensus about foreign threats during the early years allowed the executive to have great leeway in determining policy.

Durbin suggests that during the 1960s, President Nixon had two primary goals: realign the Intelligence Community (IC) in support of his policy goals, and rein in intelligence costs and activities. During the 1960s and into the 1970s, coinciding with a period of incipient détente with the Soviet Union, consensus was not as clear-cut, resulting in more clashes on intelligence between the executive and Congress.

Other key change agents abound, both within and outside the IC. Coming on the heels of Watergate, revelations by journalist Seymour Hersh "galvanized" support for legislation to curtail covert action. (135) The Gates task force of the early 1990s demonstrates the limits of internal IC efforts at reform. Though sound, his initiatives were not able to develop resilience without legislative actions to protect them from others intent on blocking reform. The families of the victims of 9/11 were stoic, powerful stakeholders, overcoming the opposition to reform in the lead up to passage of the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004.<sup>a</sup> Among these opponents were powerful congressional representatives such as Duncan Hunter, who worked hard to limit changes the families and others sought, in large part because of the perceived negative effects on the warfighter and broader Department of Defense (DoD) equities. And notwithstanding Edward Snowden's incalculable damage to US national security, he, too, was a change

---

a. See Michael Allen, *Blinking Red: Crisis and Compromise in American Intelligence after 9/11* (Potomac Books, 2016).

---

All statements of fact, opinion, or analysis expressed in this article are those of the author. Nothing in the article should be construed as asserting or implying US government endorsement of its factual statements and interpretations.

---

agent.<sup>a</sup> Durbin's suggestion that scandal may be the "most important driver of congressional intelligence reform" (264) is thus a logical conclusion, and has broader lessons for reform. Real reform takes place—for good or ill—often only when intelligence is pushed into the limelight, and, inevitably, politicized.

Durbin acknowledges the limitations of his book in its focus on the CIA, and includes among his final recommendations a call for further research on reform within collection agencies such as the National Security Agency. Space is given to examinations of defense intelligence (e.g., 117–18), but given the intelligence resources allocated to DoD and the Department's expanding role in this arena, a study of the politics of DoD intelligence building on prior research would also be a welcome addition to the literature on intelligence reform.<sup>b</sup>

Another potentially fruitful avenue for research would be employing Durbin's methodology to examine the change within the CIA itself after the September 11 terrorist attacks. Numerous studies have addressed the CIA's post-September 11 shift toward more paramilitary activities.<sup>c</sup> What role, if any, consensus and information control factored in to (and continue to play in) fostering or impeding this evolution would certainly make for a compelling read.

---

a. See Quinta Jurecic, "HPSCI Releases Full Snowden Report," <https://www.lawfareblog.com/hpsci-releases-full-snowden-report>, 22 December 2016.

b. See Janet McDonnell, "The Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence: The First 10 Years," *Studies in Intelligence* 58, no. 1 (March 2014).

c. See, for example, Henry A. Crumpton, "Intelligence and War: Afghanistan, 2001–2002," in Jennifer E. Sims and Burton Gerber, eds., *Transforming US Intelligence* (Georgetown University Press, 2005).

*The CIA and the Politics of US Intelligence Reform* addresses the importance of a flexible, adaptive IC responsive to threats of ever-expanding size and scope, a need regularly reflected in the daily headlines. In September 2018, three members of the House of Representatives called on the IC to investigate the national security implications of "deepfakes": photos, video or audio clips that appear genuine but have been manipulated.<sup>d</sup> And yet, the renewed US focus on "great power competition" as a threat to national security demonstrates the continuing importance of a deep understanding of traditional, state-based challenges.<sup>e</sup> Durbin asserts that such an adaptable intelligence system requires a change in the political environment to help foster needed reform, and calls for policies devoid of political considerations. As the historical record shows, however, overcoming such challenges in the interest of responsible, lasting reform remains a tall order.<sup>f</sup>

---

d. Jonathan Vanian, "US Lawmakers Sound Alarm Over the Threat of 'Deep Fakes'," *Fortune*, 13 September 2018, <http://fortune.com/2018/09/13/deep-fakes-lawmakers-national-security>. Also see

Kaveh Waddell, "Lawmakers plunge into 'deepfake' war," 31 January 2019, <https://www.axios.com/deepfake-laws-fb5de200-1bfe-4aaf-9c93-19c0ba16d744.html> and Robert Chesney and Danielle Citron, "Deepfakes and the New Disinformation War," *Foreign Affairs*, January/February 2019, 147–55.

e. James N. Mattis, US Department of Defense, "Remarks by Secretary Mattis on the National Defense Strategy," 19 January 2018, <https://dod.defense.gov/News/Transcripts/Transcript-View/Article/1420042/remarks-by-secretary-mattis-on-the-national-defense-strategy>. Also see Office of the Director of National Intelligence, *National Intelligence Strategy of the United States of America 2019*, January 2019.

f. For Hayden Peake's perspective on this book, see "Intelligence Officer's Bookshelf," *Studies in Intelligence* 62 no. 2 (June 2018): 67.



*Michael Yerushalmi* is a Department of Defense analyst with interest in Middle East and intelligence history.

## **Intelligence Officer's Bookshelf**

*Compiled and reviewed by Hayden Peake*

---

### **CURRENT TOPICS**

***Dawn of the Code War: America's Battle Against Russia, China, and the Rising Global Cyber Threat,***  
by John P Carlin with Garrett M. Graff

### **GENERAL**

***The Literary Reagan: Authentic Quotations From His Life,*** by Nicholas Dujmovic

### **HISTORICAL**

***Campaigning Culture and the Global Cold War: The Journals of the Congress of Cultural Freedom,***  
**edited** by Giles Scott-Smith and Charlotte A. Lerg

***Churchill and Tito: SOE, Bletchley Park and Supporting the Yugoslav Communists in World War II,*** by  
Christopher Catherwood

***Code Name Lise: The True Story of the Woman Who Became WWII's Most Decorated Spy,*** by Larry  
Loftis

***A Covert Action: Reagan, The CIA, and the Cold War Struggle in Poland,*** by Seth G. Jones

***The Secret History of KGB Spy Cameras 1945-1995,*** by H. Keith Melton & Lt. Col. Vladimir Alekseenko  
with Michael M. Hasco & Detlev Vreisleben

***Spy Pilot: Francis Gary Powers, The U-2 Incident, and A Controversial Cold War Legacy,*** by Francis  
Gary Powers Jr. and Keith Dunnavant

***The Spy Who Was Left Behind: Russia, the United States, and the True Story of Betrayal and Assassination of a CIA Agent,*** by Michael Pullara

***The Third Reich Is Listening: Inside German codebreaking in 1939-45,*** by Christian Jennings

***The Watchdogs Didn't Bark: The CIA, NSA, and the Crimes of the War on Terror,*** by John Duffy & Ray  
Nowosielski

### **MEMOIR**

***Nine Lives: My Time as the West's Top Spy Inside al Qaeda,*** by Aimen Dean with Tim Lester and Paul  
Cruikshank

***Terrorism, Betrayal & Resilience: My Story of the 1998 U.S. Embassy Bombings,*** by Prudence Bushnell

### **INTELLIGENCE ABROAD**

***Disrupt and Deny: Spies, Special Forces, and the Secret Pursuit of British Foreign Policy,*** by Rory  
Cormac

***Inside The Wilderness of Mirrors: Australia and the Threat From The Soviet Union in the Cold War and Russia Today,*** by Paul Dibb

***Pakistan Adrift: Navigating Troubled Waters,*** by Asad Durrani.

---

All statements of fact, opinion, or analysis expressed in this article are those of the author. Nothing in the article should be construed as asserting or implying US government endorsement of its factual statements and interpretations.

---





## CURRENT TOPICS

*Dawn of the Code War: America's Battle Against Russia, China, and the Rising Global Cyber Threat*, by John P. Carlin with Garrett M. Graff. (PublicAffairs, 2018) 464, endnotes, index.

Early in 2004, the FBI discovered that a hacker had obtained the password of every employee including the director, Robert Mueller. Fortunately, the hacker was himself an FBI employee and was quickly caught. The software the hacker had used was readily available off the internet and the FBI had been warned about it when the software creators, L0pht (pronounced "loft") Heavy Industries, testified about cyber vulnerabilities before the Senate in 1998. This was the same firm that had previously criticized "Microsoft . . . for its 'kindergarten crypto' protection. (122-23) Twenty years later in May 2018, L0pht testified again, this time before the House, and cautioned that its previous warnings still applied; risks remained. But in the interim, the intelligence community had implemented cybersecurity programs designed to better detect and neutralize cyber penetrations. And equally important, the Justice department had shown it could prosecute and convict the perpetrators. Author John Carlin played a major role in that multi-agency effort. *Dawn of the Code War*, tells that story.

Carlin joined the Justice Department as a trial attorney right out of Harvard Law School in 1999. He was soon working on cases involving cybercrimes, since being 20 years his colleagues' junior, he "knew how to use email... make printers work." (73) Among later assignments, he served as chief of staff to FBI director Mueller, and ended his government career in 2016 as head of the Justice Department's National Security Division. At each step along the way he dealt with ever more frequent and complex forms of individual, corporate, and nation-sponsored cybercrime cases which the country was unprepared to deal with technically and legally. He provides numerous examples.

The "first national-scale computer crime" began on November 2, 1988; before the world-wide-web existed. Dubbed 'The Morris Worm' after its creator—a Cornell University student—it was self-replicating

and shut down from 8-10 percent of all the computers on the internet overnight. Institutions affected included MIT and other universities, the RAND Corporation, the Lawrence Livermore Laboratory, and the Army's Ballistic Missile Laboratory. In reporting the story, the New York Times used the word 'internet' for the first time. (92) Morris hadn't intended what happened. Fortunately, since the FBI "had only a single agent who specialized in computer crime," he was quickly caught. (93) The Morris Worm set a vital precedent for the FBI.

Carlin goes on to document an ever growing case load and the new government and civilian organizations and laws created to deal with them. The types of attacks range from extortion, vengeance, espionage, theft of personal data and intellectual property, and cyber-terrorism. Some involve individual hackers, but the most serious result from nation-state attacks with North Korea, Iran, ISIS, Russia and China being the main offenders. The magnitude and persistence of their efforts were nearly overwhelming. Carlin describes how new techniques were developed, often with the help of private security firms, to identify and catch offenders. But it is near impossible to get ahead.

Equally important and interesting, he tells how he overcame political and organizational obstacles in what became his passion: to demonstrate that offenders could be successfully prosecuted, a process once thought to be near impossible

*Dawn of the Code War* is an appropriate title. It documents an ongoing threat that shows little evidence of diminishing anytime soon. As Carlin concludes, our cybersecurity "is likely to get worse in the years ahead before it gets better... our approach as a nation and as a society remains inadequate." (395) He offers a number of suggestions for the future beginning with education. This book tells an ominous story. If ever the appellation that a book should be required reading is appropriate, this is it.

## GENERAL

*The Literary Reagan: Authentic Quotations From His Life*, by Nicholas Dujmovic. (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2019) 346, bibliography, no index.

Former CIA historian Nicholas Dujmovic (pronounced: du mo vich) is now an academic at Catholic University. His previous book, *The Literary Spy*, written under the penname Charles Lathrop, compiled a collection of quotations on the intelligence profession.

In the current work Dujmovic notes that even during his presidency Ronald Reagan was mocked as something of an intellectual buffoon. Besides being called “an amiable dunce” by Clark Clifford, novelist Gore Vidal “joked that the Reagan library had burned down and both books were lost, including the one Reagan had not finished coloring.” (x) Others commented that if Reagan said anything worthwhile, it didn’t originate “from the man himself.” (xi) *The Literary Reagan* refutes these perceptions in the words of the man himself.

Dujmovic has arranged the quotes in sixty-four categories each preceded with explanatory remarks that also list other categories where related material may be found. Each quote is annotated as to circumstance of origin. The time frame extends from Reagan’s youth to the early 1990s.

In his prefatory remarks on intelligence and the CIA, Dujmovic notes Reagan’s experience with intelligence prior his presidency on the Rockefeller Commission and adds that while president, “he read the daily intelligence briefing as well as longer assessments.” (170) The quotes include comment on covert action, the media, congress, and the Intelligence Community. He is often candidly critical of congressional committees, as when he says of the “House intelligence Committee... they are really lousing things up.” (175)

*The Literary Reagan* includes many of the president’s popular comments as for example those made after he was shot and those at the Berlin Wall. Throughout the book, Reagan’s humor is ever present. In a toast to his friend and opponent, Speaker of the House Tip O’Neill, he said, “Tip, if I had a ticket to heaven and you didn’t have one, too, I’d sell mine and go to hell with you.” (314)

Professor Dujmovic has crafted a fine collection of Reagan quotes that reflect his true nature and correct earlier conception of the man and his presidency.

## HISTORICAL

*Campaigning Culture and the Global Cold War: The Journals of the Congress of Cultural Freedom*, edited by Giles Scott-Smith and Charlotte A. Lerg. (Palgrave-Macmillan, 2017) 331, end of chapter notes, bibliography, index.

The Congress of Cultural Freedom (CCF) was formed in 1950 by Western liberals to counter the propaganda offensive from the Soviet Union. Actively supported by communists and fellow-travelers, they argued communism was the culturally superior path to the future. After CIA sponsorship of the CCF was revealed by the *New York Times*, in 1966, historians from both sides of the political spectrum published accounts that analyzed

CCF’s contributions. On the one hand, some saw it as essential to winning the ‘battle of ideas. On the other it was characterized as a morally bankrupt endeavor contaminated by CIA dollars and control. *Campaigning Culture and the Global Cold War* provides an interesting summary of the various positions, but the book’s main purpose is suggested by its subtitle: to address the journals the CCF published and their cultural significance.

Between 1948 and the present, the CCF published 23 journals in 15 countries and 10 languages. The first, *Monat*, began in Berlin before the CCF was formally founded. Seven are still in existence. *Campaigning Culture and the Global Cold War* discusses their contributions in 15 articles by 16 authors under five categories: Science, Europe, Latin America, Africa and the Middle East, and Asia. (16)

In the pre-internet world, the journals were an erudite and often controversial source of cultural commentary that spanned the globe. The articles about them discuss their origins, content, production issues, and editorial battles. The impact of the CIA connection in each case varied, and its potential influence was mitigated, according to the editors of this volume, because “efforts at coordination would still need to pass through several layers of negotiation before a journal saw the light of day, watering down the assumption of CIA control.” (12) Still, some, for example the Arabic journal *Hiwār*, ceased publication shortly after the revelations.

The two most prominent journals, *Encounter*, published in London from 1953–1990, and *Quadrant* published in Sydney from 1956–present, are illustrative of the issues all the journals faced in varying degrees. Jason Harding’s article presents a comparative analysis that seeks “to calibrate the impact of *Encounter* on the cultural Cold War... during its controversial lifespan.” He consid-

ers “the extent to which editors, contributors, readers, and antagonists” of *Encounter* and the other magazines, enriched “our understanding of the CCF” as they dealt with competing political and cultural agendas. (107) The revelations concerning CIA funding, however, had serious consequences—Steven Spender the editor resigned—and its reputation “was irreparably damaged.” (120)

*Quadrant*, on the other hand, as John Chiddick writes, is “a literary as much as a political journal, providing space for poetry and short fiction [and] topics of intellectual interest.” (303) While its support for the Vietnam War was at odds with the other journals, and certainly the CCF executive in Paris, its content reflected multiple positions on the subject and did not threaten its existence. Neither did the CIA funding issue, though it left a bad taste with some. While one editor characterized CIA dollars as “a deplorable fact,” another pointed out that “the amount that trickled down from Paris was trifling” and had never influenced a single word published.” Still as one editor conceded “it was CIA money.” (311)

*Campaigning Culture and the Global Cold War* tells the story of a global effort to demonstrate the value of free expression as opposed to a party line. Its candid assessments refute claims of undue CIA influence and is thus an important counterweight to those with extreme opposing views.

***Churchill and Tito: SOE, Bletchley Park and Supporting the Yugoslav Communists in World War II***, by Christopher Catherwood. (Frontline Books, 2017) 216, end of chapter notes, bibliography, appendix, photos, index.

In December 1943, Prime Minister Winston Churchill decided to actively support the resistance forces led by Yugoslav leader Josip Tito and deny further backing to anti-fascist forces led by Draza Mihailovic. The decision infuriated some of the SOE personnel who were with Mihailovic at the time. Some historians later concluded they were justified. Two wrote books in 1990, documenting their views. In *The Rape of Serbia*, British author Michael Lees, who had served with Mihailovic, argued passionately that Churchill

had been fed misinformation by Soviets agents serving in Cairo.<sup>a</sup> The late American journalist David Martin, author of *The Web of Disinformation: Churchill's Yugoslav Blunder* reached the same conclusion.<sup>b</sup> In 2011, BBC journalist Peter Batty published *Hoodwink-*

a. Michael Lees, *The Rape of Serbia: The British Role in Tito's Grab for Power 1943–44* (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Publishers, 1990).

b. David Martin, *The Web of Disinformation: Churchill's Yugoslav Blunder* (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Publishers, 1990).

ing Churchill, in which he supported his predecessors while adding a new twist: Tito had fed the British false information that was accepted without corroboration.<sup>a</sup>

*Churchill and Tito* says they are all wrong. It asserts that Churchill based his decision on ULTRA material that showed Mihailovic had stopped fighting the Germans and was even cooperating with them. Furthermore, it points out that those who argue, as each of the books mentioned above do, that SOE Cairo had communists on its staff were correct, but they were not ULTRA cleared and were in no position to influence Churchill on the Yugoslavia.

---

a. Peter Batty, *Hoodwinking Churchill: Tito's Great Confidence Trick* (Shepherd-Walwyn, 2011).

***Code Name Lise: The True Story of the Woman Who Became WWII's Most Decorated Spy***, by Larry Loftis. (Gallery Books, 2019) 384, endnotes, bibliography, photos, index.

Odette Marie Celine Brailly Sansom Churchill Hallows, code named LISE, was one of the more than 50 female agents who served the British Special Operations Executive (SOE) behind enemy lines in WWII. Most were trained as radio operators, or as in Lise's case, couriers. Many didn't survive. Those, like Lise, who did often endured public criticism for exaggerating their contributions. Lise was denounced for exaggerating the importance of her work with the SPINDLE network or circuit in France, where it was said "she spent much of her time in bed with her commanding officer." It was also claimed that she survived Ravensbruck because she had an ongoing affair with the commandant." Even more serious, it was charged that "she made up the stories of her torture," which included being burned with a red hot iron and having her toenails pulled out while she revealed nothing to the Gestapo. (268) *Code Name Lise* refutes these charges while telling a compelling story of personal heroism.

Author Larry Loftis is not the first to tell Lise's story. Jerrard Tickell's 1949 account, *Odette*, though undocumented—SOE records were still secret then—was well

The Lees, Martin, and Batty books are sourced; it is their interpretation of the evidence that can be questioned. Catherwood has some sources, but many important quotes are not specifically sourced, though they may be attributed to a person. And from time to time he makes unforgivable errors, for example calling Donald Maclean "an agent of the GRU." (34)

It is tempting to accept Catherwood's analysis as it is persuasive in many respects. But students of the topic desiring a well-documented result, are left with a challenge that only archival research will resolve.

received and ended with Lise's escape to the US Army in 1945.<sup>b</sup> Loftis draws on it heavily. M.R.D. Foot's official 1966 history, *S.O.E. In France*, perpetuated the story that Lise was arrested by the Abwehr while in bed with Peter Churchill, SPINDLE's commander—and no relation to the prime minister.<sup>c</sup> Lise sued and won a substantial sum. The first edition was withdrawn and reprinted with changes. *Code Name Lise* covers the same ground as the earlier works while continuing Lise's story until her death in 1972 and adding details about her service from interviews and material that came to light with the recent release of surviving SOE files.

There is no doubt that Lise was an extraordinary woman. Having survived polio and a year of blindness as a child in her native France, she married an Englishman and moved to Britain, where she had three children before the war. With her husband in service, she offered to translate for the War Department and ended up joining SOE after convincing her superiors she could make arrangements for her children's care. After regular SOE training, she

---

b. Jerrard Tickell, *Odette: The Story of a British Agent* (Chapman & Hall, 1949).

c. M.R.D. Foot, *SOE In France* (HMSO, 1966).

was sent to Southern France by boat in 1943 and assigned to work with the SPINDLE circuit under Churchill.

*Code Name Lise* describes her work as a courier, her takeover of the circuit while Churchill was away in London, and her betrayal by a colleague when he returned. After resisting Abwehr interrogator Sgt. Hugo Bleicher's (aka: Colonel Henri) attempts to get her to identify her comrades, she was turned over to the Gestapo. It was then that she was tortured, a fact subsequently documented by medical records. In May 1944, having achieved nothing from their interrogations, Lise was sent to Karlsruhe with several other SOE female agents. By then she had convinced the Gestapo that she was married to Peter Churchill and that he was a relative of the prime minister. She was the only survivor of the women sent to the Karlsruhe prison and in July 1943, was sent to Ravensbruck, the concentration camp for women north of Berlin. Between then and May 1945, she endured solitary confinement except for short periods in the infirmary.

Only when the commandant realized the war was lost and the Russians were coming did he bundle her into his car and escape. Saving Lise was to be his "meal ticket" when they reached the Americans. But when they encountered a US Army roadblock, Lise turned in the commandant.

After the war, Lise married Peter—they later divorced—testified at the Ravensbruck war crimes trial, received an M.B.E., and became the first woman to be awarded the George Cross. These are the awards alluded to in the subtitle of *Code Name Lise*, although Loftis acknowledges that a more accurate phrasing would be "the war's most highly decorated woman." (358) Notoriety followed the awards that in turn led to the book by Tickell and a movie—with Peter Ustinov—before Lise, now known as Odette, died in 1995. Loftis concludes by telling what happened to the other characters—German, French, and British—featured in the book, thus closing the circle on the story of a patriotic agent.

**A** *Covert Action: Reagan, The CIA, and the Cold War Struggle in Poland*, by Seth G. Jones. (W. W. Norton, 2018) 418, endnotes, photos, index.

On 12 December 1981, Poland's Prime Minister Wojciech Jaruzelski declared martial law in the country then beset by strikes, sabotage, and mass demonstrations linked to the Solidarity movement led by Lech Wałęsa.

(4) It was not a total surprise to the National Security Council thanks to Colonel Ryszard Jerzy Kukliński, a Polish army staff officer and CIA agent recently exfiltrated to the United States. While the CIA's initial assessment was that martial law "was possible though unlikely," (8) it had developed options for both possibilities. *A Covert Action* tells the story of America's response, codenamed QRHELPFUL, according to Jones.

QRHELPFUL was nothing like the attempted para military action at Cuba's Bay of Pigs or most recently in Afghanistan. As Jones describes the operation, the United States provided money for demonstrations, equipment for printing publications, and hardware for radio and TV broadcasts that advocated Solidar-

ity's positions and activities. A key factor enhanced the chances of success: Solidarity was "a grass roots organization that was already legitimate among Poles" whose members were likely to—and did—cooperate. (10)

In *A Covert Action*, Seth Jones, the Harold Brown chair and director of the Transnational Threats Project (TNT) at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), tells the story of QRHELPFUL from US and Polish perspectives—opposition and government—based on interviews with participants and materials recently released from archives of both countries. Jones tells the story chronologically, switching from activities in the Solidarity movement to those at the CIA. He also takes note of the pope's participation and that of a number of other European countries.

For example he describes how the CIA recruited the necessary agents in Poland and elsewhere in Eu-

rope, essential to smuggling equipment and funds. At the same time, he reveals how Solidarity used the assistance clandestinely in the hostile Polish political environment where surveillance was continuous. Progress was slow and success was not achieved until April 1989, when Solidarity was legalized, elections held, and Wałęsa became Poland's first freely elected

president. In November 1989, President Wałęsa addressed a joint session of the United States Congress.

*A Covert Action* tells a unique story of a successful covert action that allowed anti-communist Poles to achieve their goals by doing their own heavy lifting, while stimulating the fall of communism in Eastern Europe. It is a valuable contribution to the intelligence literature and an exemplar of successful covert influence action.

***The Secret History of KGB Spy Cameras, 1945–1995***, by H. Keith Melton and Lt. Col. Vladimir Alekseenko with Michael M. Hasco and Detlev Vreisleben. (Schiffer Military History, 2018) 192, bibliography, photos, glossary index.

In now seemingly ancient times, before digital cameras, intelligence officers employed photography to copy documents provided by their agents; to record clandestinely images of their opponents and the facilities from which they operated; and to acquire images of their latest military hardware. All without knowing, for hours or even weeks after the event, whether their photographic efforts were successful. Thus, the cameras required to accomplish their mission had to meet strict performance criteria to assure success. During the Cold War, the cameras employed by the KGB and the GRU were both high-end foreign products and those especially designed and built locally to meet unique requirements. *The Secret History of KGB Spy Cameras 1945–1995* provides a pictorial and written record of their efforts.

Each of the authors possesses unique knowledge. The late Vladimir Alekseenko was a KGB technical officer with extensive experience overseas, where he specialized in microphotography and cryptography for covert agent communications. He also secured the cooperation of former colleagues, which was vital in gaining access to the material for this book. Keith Melton is a renowned collector of espionage artifacts and the author of books on the OSS and on espionage paraphernalia generally. Michael M. Hasco and Detlev Vreisleben are also collectors of espionage memorabilia and provided assistance in important areas. The foreword by retired FBI supervisory special agent Gerald Richards is a significant endorsement. He spent much of the Cold War work-

ing against the KGB and the GRU in the United States and understands how they employed their cameras.

Melton and Alekseenko, the principal authors, began work on their book more than 10 years ago. The result is an unprecedented, richly illustrated record of 94 KGB and 12 GRU operational cameras—still and motion picture—with technical details, auxiliary equipment, and examples of their use.

After a short historical account of the KGB and GRU services, the authors review the origins of their photographic units from 1930 to 1945. They then discuss each document-copying camera, and each camera devoted to surveillance. The former category includes the then revolutionary GRU rollover camera developed in the mid 1950s. It contained its own power and light source, film supply with automatic advance, and rolling optical bar that placed the image on the film as it was passed over a document. It was, in effect, a predecessor to the modern scanner. Slightly larger than a standard index card and about ¼ inch thick it was as easy to conceal as it was to use.

The KGB F21 or Ajax-12 camera is illustrated in multiple applications. It is shown as a buttonhole camera, mounted on a brooch, attached to a belt buckle, and in numerous concealment devices. As with all entries, descriptions and technical details—lens focal length, film type, cassette capacity—are ac-

accompanied by color photographs and in many cases graphic illustrations—in the very recognizable Russia style—showing typical working conditions.

There is a chapter devoted to “compromise” photography, sometimes called “honeytraps,” that includes pinhole cameras—placed in walls—with various supporting equipment. The accompanying illustration establishes the overall setup, and the photographs are from an actual KGB operation and show how a diplomat was compromised.

The KGB also employed commercial cameras when circumstances demanded, as was the case with Richard

Sorge, their agent in China and Japan. The German Minox is another example. The authors present two detailed accounts of their use by well-known agents. The first is KGB agent and US Navy Warrant Officer John Walker. The second is GRU officer and US-UK agent Oleg Penkovsky. Both sections show the Minox cameras they employed and, in Penkovsky’s case, some of the surveillance photos the KGB took of him before he was arrested.

*The Secret History of KGB Spy Cameras* is a comprehensive treatment of how Soviet agents collected and communicated material and how they surveilled their targets. The book is a fine and unique contribution to the intelligence literature.

***Spy Pilot: Francis Gary Powers, The U-2 Incident, and a Controversial Cold War Legacy***, by Francis Gary Powers Jr. and Keith Dunnivant. Foreword by Sergei Khrushchev. (Prometheus Books, 2019) 312, endnotes, photos, index.

“Did Francis Gary Powers betray his country?” is a tough question for a son to answer about his father. *Spy Pilot* explains why he asked and how he discovered the answer. (159)

Gary Powers Jr. was born in 1965, 15 years after the Soviet Union shot down the U-2 his father piloted on 1 May 1960 and caused a major international incident. President Eisenhower, assured that the pilot and plane could not have survived, proclaimed the official cover story that the U-2 was on a weather-related mission and had strayed off course. Only after Soviet Premier Khrushchev produced the pilot alive and photos of the U-2’s wreckage, including its cameras, did the president admit publicly that the mission’s real purpose was aerial espionage. Powers was given a public trial during which he pleaded guilty and apologized before being sentenced to 10 years imprisonment. Further embarrassment followed when Khrushchev walked out of an already scheduled summit meeting with Eisenhower.

Then, in February 1962, thanks to his father and the CIA, Powers was exchanged, for KGB colonel Rudolf Abel, an event memorialized in the 2015 movie *Bridge of Spies*.

The lengthy CIA debriefings that followed Powers’s release raised questions in some minds about the accuracy of his explanation for the shootdown. An unspoken consensus arose suggesting that “by allowing himself to be captured alive . . . Powers was a traitor.” (122) When asked what he thought James Bond would have done in the circumstances, Ian Fleming replied, “I hope he would have taken his pill.” (264) In fact, Powers didn’t have a lethal pill, it was a poisoned needle and its use was optional. While the official results of his debriefing found that he had acted properly during the shootdown, at the trial, and in prison, doubts lingered in some parts of the CIA, Congress, and the Air Force—Powers official home—and even in his hometown, where his then brother-in-law noted “Some people thought he was a traitor. . . . He ought to have killed himself. That’s how a lot of people felt.” (121)

The first part of *Spy Pilot* presents the details of these events as background. They were largely unknown to Powers Jr. The first 11 years of his life were spent in the southern California with his father and his second wife, Claudia, Gary Jr.’s mother. Friends included celebrities, among them actor Robert Conrad and his family, who became lifelong friends. Overall the young Powers



was happy, and he developed a close relationship with his father, who worked first for the Lockheed Corporation as a test pilot and then as a helicopter pilot for a Los Angeles TV station reporting traffic conditions. In 1970, after some resistance from CIA, Powers Sr. published his memoir, *Operation Overflight*, which gave his position on the accusations often made against him.<sup>a</sup> Then only five, his son was too young to understand the details.

All that changed in 1977. Powers Sr. was scheduled to appear before a congressional committee to discuss the persistent controversy around his case. He planned to take 11-year old Gary with him to Washington because “it was time for his son to learn about his complicated history.” (138) Then, on the first of August, Francis Gary Powers died when his helicopter ran out of fuel.

After a brief description of his not untroubled adolescent years, *Spy Pilot* goes on to describe the incident that led Powers to devote much of his adult life to determining and publicizing the truth about his father. The key incident occurred in 1986 with his accidental discovery of the U-2 unveiling ceremony at the Smithsonian Museum in Washington to which he had not been invited. He went

anyway and was received well. That event, he writes, was “the catalyst to a much broader and more ambitious quest, which would consume the better part of my life.” (159)

Powers’ quest began in college and continued over many years, during which he married and held various day jobs. It involved interviews with his father’s former colleagues and his critics at home and overseas. Of great importance was the discovery of audio tapes on which his father had added details of the U-2 incident that were not allowed in his book. To these sources Powers added formerly classified documents obtained under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)—many quoted at length—that proved much of what Powers Sr. had claimed about the sequence of events during the shootdown, including the altitude at which he was flying—70,000 feet—long withheld from the public record. Along the way, he discovered medals his father had earned but had not been awarded during his lifetime, including the POW Medal, the Distinguished Flying Cross, the National Service Medal, the CIA Director’s Medal, and the Silver Star. They were finally awarded posthumously. (249–51)

*Spy Pilot* acknowledges that some will “always see Francis Gary Powers as a tainted figure.” (264) But his son is now satisfied he has revealed the truth. His father would be proud.

---

a. Francis Gary Powers with Curt Gentry, *Operation Overflight: The U2 Spy Pilot Tells His Story For The First Time* (Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1970).

***The Spy Who Was Left Behind: Russia, the United States, and the True Story of the Betrayal and Assassination of a CIA Agent***, by Michael Pullara. (Scribner, 2018) 352, appendix, index.

Michael Pullara is a Texas trial lawyer whose brother had known Freddie Woodruff in high school. After Pullara read in the *New York Times* that Woodruff—a CIA officer—had died from a gunshot to the head on 8 August 1993 in the Republic of Georgia, he followed subsequent reports closely. On 30 December 1993, the media reported a Georgian, Anzor Sharmaidze, had been convicted of the crime and sentenced to 15 years in prison. The Georgian government concluded the murder “was not intentional, and not their fault.” The State department soon announced that Woodruff had been killed “by a random act of violence.” (6) But as Pullara understood the facts of the

crime, the man convicted couldn’t have done it. Then he learned that the US government was looking into “what role, if any, [Aldrich] Ames had played in the death of Freddie Woodruff.” Ames had purportedly visited Woodruff two week before his death. (7) After the *New York Times* raised the question, a TASS headline responded, “Ames Case, Woodruff’s Murder, Not Linked.” (9)

There the matter rested until October 1995 when the former head of the Georgian security service publicly asserted that “Woodruff had been killed at the behest of the SVR”—the Russian foreign intel-

ligence service. (7) Pullara promptly filed a FOIA request with the CIA, NSA, and FBI. More than a year later an FBI response added information that did not match previous accounts; this Pullara describes in prodigious and at points unsettling detail. (10)

Another four years elapsed before more FOIA material arrived, and it only raised more questions. So Pullara decided to go to Georgia and conduct his own investigation. *The Spy Who Was Left Behind* tells how Pullara, a private citizen—with some FBI help—developed legal, medical, law enforcement, and security service sources in Georgia before taking the unusual step of filing a petition with the Georgian Supreme Court. It was initially rejected after an extended hearing; Pullara appealed. Receiving no response, he went public and convinced producers of *60 Minutes* to go to Georgia and do a story on Woodruff. It was then that President Saakashvili reopened the case. In the end, Sharmaidze was released, and the government promised to reinvestigate the case with the objective of identifying the real killer.

Using the press to keep the pressure on and recalling that the former head of the Georgian security service publicly had claimed that “Woodruff had been killed at the behest of the SVR,” Pullara develops a detailed and plausible case that this was probably true and that the GRU was also involved. The key assumption on which his theory rests is that Ames had inadvertently revealed his work for the SVR to Woodruff and Woodruff had been assassinated to keep him quiet.

*The Spy Who Was Left Behind* might better have been titled “the spy who was almost forgotten.” Pullara’s account does not resolve the case completely. But he does establish two irrefutable points: the original explanations for Woodruff’s murder were incorrect, and a dedicated civilian lawyer can make a difference. Both are worth remembering.<sup>a</sup>

---

a. CIA publicly lifted Woodruff’s cover and revealed his service for CIA in Georgia in May 2012, during its annual memorial ceremony at the Memorial Wall. Woodruff’s Memorial Star had been inscribed on to the wall in 1994.

***The Third Reich Is Listening: Inside German Codebreaking in 1939–45***, by Christian Jennings. (Osprey Publishing, 2018) 368, endnotes, bibliography, photos, index.

The codebreaking abilities of people in Bletchley Park during WWII have been described in numerous books since the publication of *The ULTRA Secret in 1974*.<sup>b</sup> The German efforts to intercept and break allied codes have received less attention. *The Third Reich Is Listening* takes a big step toward correcting that deficiency, with surprising results.

Toward the end of WWII, the British and Americans sent four joint teams of specialists into Germany to discover and recover materials on four Nazi programs. Team ALSIOS dealt with nuclear matters. OVERCAST was charged with material on the V-1 and V-2 rockets. Team SURGEON was concerned with avionics and jet aircraft. The most secret was the target intelligence committee

or TICOM; it went after the German signals intelligence materials. *The Third Reich Is Listening* tells its story.

British foreign correspondent Christian Jennings has examined German cryptologic files captured by TICOM which are now available on various intelligence agency websites and in the National Archives of the United States, Britain, and Germany. His account depicts how they were discovered, what they revealed, and how the Germans applied the information they collected.

Discovery was relatively easy since many Germans were eager to cooperate. Getting to the files before the Soviets was another matter and TICOM was not always successful. In the end, material was found at the bottom of a lake, buried in the ground, in abandoned signal units, and obtained from interviews with civilian, military, and Foreign Office cryptanalysts.

---

b. F. W. Winterbotham, *The ULTRA Secret* (Harper & Row, 1974).

It was called the TICOM archive and copies were sent to Britain and the United States. (16–17, 305)

In general, what the findings revealed was surprising, although it would be years before analysts got through the volume and longer still before the material was declassified. The German SIGINT program was far more sophisticated than previously thought, and Jennings reviews its history from the prewar days until the war's end. He shows that their SIGINT efforts contributed directly to their early victories. The naval capabilities were especially good as shown during the Battle of the Atlantic and against the Russians in Finland, to give two examples.

Jennings notes two major weaknesses in the German SIGINT program; both non-technical. The first was their assumption that the Allies would mention their ability to break Enigma in their traffic and when they did not, assumed Enigma was secure. Second he shows that there was “a lack of trust between the codebreaking agencies and their senior German leaders” that limited their ability to employ the information acquired from the intercepts. (316)

*The Third Reich Is Listening* provides new detail on the TICOM program and is another instance that supports the argument that intelligence does not win wars.

***The Watchdogs Didn't Bark: The CIA, NSA, and the Crimes of the War on Terror***, by John Duffy & Ray Nowosielski and John Duffy. (Hot Books, 2018) 328, endnotes, bibliography, index.

Conspiracies are a matter of historical fact. The Gun Powder Plot to blow up the British parliament, the assassination of President Lincoln, and the 9/11 attacks are well known examples. Conspiracy theories, while equally prevalent and often supported by reputable advocates, lack historical legitimacy. *The Watchdogs Didn't Bark* presents two examples. The first, suggests that the CIA decision not to inform the FBI about the presence two known terrorists in the United States prior to 9/11 was an intentional act to keep secret CIA attempts to recruit at least one of them as an agent. The second, is the subsequent cover up intended to keep first secret.

Authors John Duffy and Ray Nowosielski have been advancing these conspiracy theories for at least 10 years. In their judgment, the perpetrators, whom they identify, should be held accountable.

In support of the first theory, they quote an interview with the respected and very knowledgeable Richard Clarke, a White House counterterrorism advisor under presidents Clinton and Bush. In Clarke's view, the failure to tell the FBI can only be explained if one accepts the idea that CIA did so intentionally to protect the recruitment, even though by not informing the FBI it was breaking the law. The key assumption is that the FBI

was not informed. Former CIA officer Bob Baer commented on that point in a 21 September 2011 interview with the authors. He said at the time, “I always passed things to the FBI if I thought it was of interest. I didn't ask permission. You had FBI agents in headquarters working in your unit, or they came around, or you called them up on the phone. I mean, that's the way things are supposed to work.”<sup>a</sup> Baer's comments are not included in *Watchdogs*. Were things working that way in Alec Station—the CIA unit monitoring the two terrorists—where the FBI had special agents assigned? The authors do not address the question directly. They do relate a story about an FBI agent who saw a January 2000 cable indicating one of the eventual 9/11 terrorists was planning a trip to the United States. When he asked permission to forward it to the FBI, he was told that it was not the FBI's concern, and he dropped the matter. (121)

The authors also include a joint statement by former Director of Central Intelligence George Tenet; Cofer Black, former chief of the counterterrorism center; and Richard Blee, former chief of Alec Station. To no one's surprise, they dispute Clarke's interpretation. (8-9) The balance of the book, however, cites

---

a. <http://911truth.org/who-is-rich-blee/>.

sources—former intelligence officers and journalists—that provide anecdotal support of Clarke’s theory.

In the end, after accusing many former CIA and some NSA officers of wrong-doing, the authors conclude “Those who do wrong for the empire will be covered. That is why Tenet could perjure himself and then retire to his comfortable life.” His actions and those of

CTC and Alec Station, they claim, contributed to “the largest terrorist attack in US history.” (251) Like all conspiracy theories, hard evidence is lacking, and alternative explanations are dismissed out of hand.

*The Watchdogs Didn’t Bark* is a contribution to the intelligence literature, but not a valuable one.

### **Memoir**

***Nine Lives: My Time as the West’s Top Spy Inside al Qaeda***, by Aimen Dean with Tim Lister and Paul Cruickshank. (Oneworld Publications, 2018) 467, endnotes, index.

Aimen Dean swore allegiance to Osama bin Laden (OBL) while holding the hand of the sheikh himself. It was 1997, the end of Dean’s third life. Having survived jihadist wars in Bosnia and the Philippines—his second life—he began his fourth life in service to al-Qaeda after training as a bombmaker in Afghanistan. By the end of 1998, disillusioned by the gratuitous killing of civilians of all faiths and plans to kill more, he had begun his fifth life as an agent of MI6.

Born in Bahrain, Dean grew up in Saudi Arabia with five brothers in a conservative Muslim family. Inclined intellectually as a young boy, he studied the Koran and soon discovered he had a photographic memory. At the time, his Islam was one that was “rich and compassionate that celebrated its history and morality.” (164) He also read the basic Muslim writings including those by Sayid Qutb, who argued for a “jihad to restore Muslim sovereignty,” (31) though the methods he advocated raised doubts, put aside at the time, that would later return. This was the period of life number one.

*Nine Lives* tells how the young intellectual Muslim evolved into a dedicated teenage jihadist who eventually became, with the help of the Bahrainian security service, an MI6 agent in 1998.

After his initial interviews with MI6 in Bahrain, Dean was flown to London, where his bona fides were established. The next step was deciding what to do with a

Muslim agent thought to be loyal to Osama bin Laden and who knew most of his key subordinates. These included Aymen al-Zawahiri, Abu Zubaydah, and bin Laden’s biological bombmaking expert. Sending him back to Afghanistan to spy on al-Qaeda was an attractive option, but future contact would be problematic. A clever solution was worked after Dean revealed his father and grandfather had worked for the British Foreign Office in Saudi Arabia, duties not stated, and had known H. St. John Philby, whom Dean incorrectly identifies as a British spy—that was his son Kim. (170) In any case, both had British passports and that qualified Dean for one as well. Already trusted by bin Laden and his associates, Dean’s British passport allowed him to travel where they could not. In practice this meant frequent trips to London among other cities. Agent handling proved less difficult.

*Nine Lives* describes many missions Dean undertook in the Middle East and in the UK working with MI5 against the local radical Muslims during his eight years as an agent. For example he warned about the Millennium Plot and was able to indicate “something big” was planned but did not know about the 9/11 attacks. On the chemical front, he helped neutralize a nicotine bomb plot without being caught—life number seven.

Then in 2006, Dean received a text message that said: “Brother go into hiding, there is a spy among us.” Dean’s cover was blown; details of his penetra-

tion had appeared the book *The One Percent Doctrine*,<sup>a</sup> and soon in other US publications; his eighth life had come to an end. While he was not named and the source of the leak, according to the authors is not known, it didn't take al-Qaeda long to identify him. A fatwa was issued authorizing his death on sight.

The chapter on Dean's ninth life tells how he survived the manhunt—to date—married and start-

---

a. Ronald Suskind, *The One Percent Doctrine: Deep Inside America's Pursuit of Its Enemies Since 9/11* (Simon & Schuster, 2006), 216–17.

***Terrorism, Betrayal & Resilience: My Story of the 1998 U.S. Embassy Bombings***, by Prudence Bushnell. (Potomac Books, 2018) 246, endnotes, bibliography, photos, index.

On 7 August 1998, al-Qaeda bombed the US embassy in Nairobi, Kenya. Osama bin Laden chose Nairobi because the ambassador “was a woman whose death would generate more press.” (218) Two hundred and thirteen died, five thousand—mostly locals—were wounded. Ambassador Prudence Bushnell survived. *Terrorism, Betrayal & Resilience* tells her disturbing story.

Media attention in the United States was brief; the Lewinsky affair was underway. At the State Department the response, after the initial shock, was curious. When Susan Rice, the assistant secretary for African affairs called the temporary embassy in Nairobi, she said to Bushnell that “I had no idea that your embassy was so close to the street.” The ambassador replied brusquely that “I wrote you . . . and the secretary of state about it.” In fact, the cable was just the most recent notice about the embassy's vulnerabilities Bushnell had sent during the previous two years. But her efforts had only “provoked complaints of ‘nagging’ and accusations of being obsessed,” and later she was labeled a nuisance. The only official response she received was a letter noting there were no funds for the security changes recommended. (12)

The State Department's reaction in terms of sending help did not go well. Crisis response teams were delayed as was the evacuation of the wounded. Am-

ed a family. *Nine Lives* concludes with Dean's thoughtful reflections on radical Islamic terrorism and its contemporary manifestations.

Coauthors Tim Lester and Paul Cruickshank explain at the outset that the agent-handling portions of *Nine Lives* are based largely on non-attributable interviews. Sources for events and weapons systems discussed are provided in the endnotes. Thus much must be taken as it was written until official records are released. It has the ring of truth and is worth close attention.

bassador Bushnell was forced to improvise in a very stressful situation. But she managed to provide effective leadership and successfully fought a lethargic State Department for compensatory funds for the families of the Kenyans killed and then battled the Kenyan government for a proper location for a new embassy.

A subsequent report prepared for incoming President Bush by the Council on Foreign Relations and the Center for Strategic and International Studies, confirmed her assessment of the State Department's dismal response to the bombing. It concluded, “the apparatus of U.S. foreign policy making and implementation . . . is in a state of severe disrepair. The Department of State suffers from long term mismanagement, antiquated equipment, and dilapidated and insecure facilities.” (106–107)

A mandatory Accountability Review Board investigation took place, but its report neither placed blame nor answered basic questions, such as what preventive measures should have been taken. Neither did it recommend specific follow-up actions. A more informative account was leaked to the *New York Times*.<sup>b</sup> It quoted parts from Bushnell's many communications forewarning the depart-

---

b. James Risen and Benjamin Weiser, “Before Bombings, Omens and Fears,” *New York Times*, 9 January 1999.

ment and added that the CIA and FBI had “been amassing increasingly ominous and detailed clues about potential threats in Kenya prior to the bombing.” It even revealed that an unidentified walk-in to the Nairobi Embassy had warned about the attacks, but had been dismissed by the CIA as unreliable without follow-up in Nairobi. (82)

Besides establishing the essential facts of the bombing and its immediate aftermath and longer term consequences, Ambassador Bushnell weaves three sub-themes into the narrative that will be equally rewarding to many readers. One covers her background and answers the question how did a woman become ambassador to Kenya? Another presents what and how she learned about bin Laden and what the intelligence services knew about him and the terrorism threat generally. The third

sub-theme follows her career after Nairobi. She served as ambassador to Guatemala, at the State Department’s Foreign Service Institute, where she developed and presented courses on leadership. In the end, accepting that she could not overcome the subtle but persistent internal resistance—for reasons she explains—to further assignments, she retired. Civilian life led to some occupational oscillation until she decided to write this book and put her leadership knowledge on a profitable basis by giving lectures and courses on the topic.

*Terrorism, Betrayal & Resilience* is a memoir of unusual importance. It is at once a modern woman’s story and a contribution to the study of intelligence and terrorism. But is not a revelation of the State Department’s finest hour.

### Intelligence Abroad

***Disrupt and Deny: Spies, Special Forces, and the Secret Pursuit of British Foreign Policy***, by Rory Cormac. (Oxford University Press, 2018) 394, endnotes, bibliography, index.

This book is about covert action, often called the third option or what a nation does when diplomacy or military force won’t accomplish an objective. University of Nottingham historian, Rory Cormac, acknowledges at the outset that the term is “most commonly. . . associated with the Americans, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), and paramilitary activities during the Cold War.” But, he goes on, “few appreciate that for the UK, a country seemingly in perennial decline . . . covert action has been even more important. The British are just better at keeping it covert.” (2) He does not account for the possibility CIA has conducted covert actions about which he has no knowledge. In any case, *Disrupt and Deny* reviews Britain’s long history in covert action and assesses its utility with frequent comparisons with the record of its American ally.

After a short summary of British covert actions beginning in the reign of Elizabeth I, Cormac focuses on operations from post 1945 to the cyber age that span the world. After acknowledging that much more has been

written about US than British covert actions, he asserts that it would be misleading “to view British operations through this prism, given Washington’s more rigid approach.” (10) An approach, he goes on to suggest without specifics, that includes “the domain of so-called ‘rogue elephants’ acting of their own volition.” (11) The British, by comparison, initially adopted the “pinprick” tactics recommended by Sir Stuart Menzies, chief of MI6, which linked traditional intelligence and covert action and provided a gradual learning curve. (60)

In its chronological assessment of British covert action, *Disrupt and Deny* covers the policy issues where covert action was recommended as a solution and how they were dealt with by factions within the government. It also assesses the views of the principal implementers, mainly the Foreign Office, the intelligence services and Special Forces elements. The bureaucratic conflicts were considerable and international. For example, suggestions for countering communism behind the Iron Curtain ranged from economic disruption to subversion. Ques-

tions of who should do what were complicated even more when it was learned the Americans were contemplating similar issues. Cormac reveals that what came to be a joint effort was initiated because if “the Americans worked alone, they would make a mess of it.” (27) In the end, what amounted to an ad hoc approach to liberation policy, their joint efforts failed, in part due to Philby’s betrayal, but overall because it was a joint mess.

An example of success, the overthrow of the Iranian government in 1953, began as a singleton British effort employing bribery and attempts to interfere in Iranian elections. Foiled when the Brits were expelled before they could take action, they turned to the United States for help. Although initially unreceptive, the CIA ultimately agreed to cooperate and Operation Ajax—the British called it Operation Boot—returned the shah to power. Cormac describes the concerns raised by both sides, the oscillating positions taken by the Foreign Office and the delicate issues that determined actions. Although Churchill and senior diplomats found working with the

Americans frustrating,” writes Cormac, “cooperation paid off in the long run. With the CIA taking the lead, the UK suffered less criticism.” (98) Operation Boot also changed British thinking about covert action as a policy tool; “it would be used repeatedly across the Middle East in the coming decade” and many examples are provided. (108)

In the final chapter, “The British Way,” Cormac summarizes important policy distinctions that separate the British and US approaches to covert action. These include its use as a defensive tool—even when it is offensive in application—as a means to preserve the status quo rather than regime change, as a way of sustaining influence, and as a means, in Britain’s case, “to prevent or mask decline.” (267)

*Disrupt and Deny* is a very important component of the covert action conversation—to use a contemporary term—encompassing its suitability and its value in international politics. Cormac has provided the first history of British covert action. It is a seminal contribution.

***Inside The Wilderness of Mirrors: Australia and the Threat from The Soviet Union in the Cold War and Russia Today***, by Paul Dibb. (Melbourne University Publishing, 2018) 173, endnotes, index.

From his current position as Emeritus Professor of Strategic Studies at the Australian National University’s Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Paul Dibb writes that “It is commonplace in today’s strategic thinking to believe that Australia did not play an important role with regard to intelligence or military operations against the Soviet Union.” (xiii) *Inside The Wilderness of Mirrors* is intended to correct that misapprehension. In conveying his message, Dibb’s follows his own career, highlighting his contributions to the events discussed.

He begins his story in August 1965, while serving in the Bureau of Agricultural Economics. Returning from an authorized visit to the Soviet Embassy in Canberra in connection with a planned visit to the Soviet Union to discuss agricultural matters, he was summoned to ASIO (Australian Security Intelligence Service). His embassy visit had gone well, he was informed, and they had some questions

for him. It was the beginning of 20 years as an ASIO source, a relationship he valued and maintained while holding a number of high level government positions.

His main ASIO tasking was to report on the Soviets, and later Russians, whom he met in the course of his work at home and overseas. By the 1980s, he had become a Soviet expert, and his contacts included the KGB rezident, Lev Koshlyakov, later described in Volume 3 of the ASIO Official History “as one of the most dangerous KGB officers ever posted to Australia.” (18)

Among his later assignments, Dibb served as head of the National Assessments Staff, deputy secretary of defense for strategy and intelligence, and director of the Joint Intelligence Organization (D/JIO). In each position he had frequent contact with CIA and NSA officers. In Australia, the subject was often the joint

US-Australian Pine Gap SIGINT facility. In Washington, discussions focused on the Soviet Union.

During one visit to CIA Headquarters, while Dobb was D/JIO and after he had published his book *The Soviet Union: The Incomplete Superpower* (University of Illinois Press, 1986), he met with Deputy Director Bob Gates who told him, “The CIA has read your book . . . and the Agency believes you are wrong.” (107) It was not the first time the two agencies disagreed. Dobb considered CIA views “alarmist” and found the State Department’s Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) analysis concerning the Soviet Union to be “more measured . . . nuanced.” (109) He was also critical of the US response to the

Exercise Able Archer scare with the Soviet Union in 1983. (39ff) His CIA judgments were not always on the mark, however, for example the bizarre statement that “Kim Philby . . . helped with the creation of the CIA.” (23)

Dobb also writes about disagreements with Australian analysts and policy makers—often over his views on the Soviet Union—some causing him career difficulties. And while he attributes the book’s title to problems related to his service as an ASIO source, it could well apply to his career dealing with the government bureaucracy.

In the end, *Inside the Wilderness of Mirrors* provides a singular insider’s view of the Australian intelligence community and is worth close attention.

***Pakistan Adrift: Navigating Troubled Waters***, by Asad Durrani. (C. Hurst & Co. Publishers Ltd. 2018) 273, endnotes, index.

Lt. Gen. Asad Durrani is a soldier, diplomat, and author. His military assignments included service as the director of military intelligence (DMI), head of the National Defense College, and from 1990–92, the director-general of Inter-Service Intelligence (ISI). As a diplomat, after retirement, he was ambassador to Germany and Saudi Arabia. His 2018 book, *The Spy Chronicles*, was co-authored with A. S. Dulat, the former head of the Indian intelligence service.<sup>a</sup> The Pakistani government was less than pleased with the book—so much so that it reportedly stripped him of his pension—in part because he argued that the madness between India and Pakistan should end and then added that the army probably knew ahead of time about the raid to capture or kill Osama bin Laden.<sup>b</sup> *Pakistan Adrift* should cause the government less angst.

The concept of being adrift is embodied in Durrani’s description of Pakistan’s government since its inception in 1947. While nominally a parliamentary democracy, its frequent changes of leadership have been imposed more by coup or assassination than elections. Thus national purpose or strategic outlook tended to be volatile, subject to the whims of the current leader and the pressures brought by outside forces. Durrani deals at length with the problems that result and the individuals responsible as he observed them throughout his career.

The main outside forces of his attention are India, Afghanistan, and the United States, which was often involved in Pakistan’s relations with the others. For example, Durrani notes that “between ISI and the CIA . . . communication and coordination worked well as long as the Soviets were in Afghanistan. . . . Though that did not mean that they trusted each other. Differences surfaced as soon as the Soviets withdrew.” (135) After 9/11, when Pakistan joined the US-led coalition, albeit “with a gun to its head,” a decision that “did not amuse India,” (97) “key ISI operatives, were vilified, allegedly for having favored the more radical of the Afghan groups. The charges that the Agency [ISI] was infested

a. A. S. Dulat, Asad Durrani, and Aditya Sinha. *The Spy Chronicles: RAW, ISI and the Illusion of Peace* (Harper-Collins India, 2018). The book was reviewed in *Studies* 62, no. 3 “Intelligence Officer’s Bookshelf.”

b. [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia\\_pacific/pakistans-army-strips-ex-spy-chief-of-pension-over-book/2019/02/22/70211d54-36a4-11e9-8375-e3dcf6b68558\\_story.html?noredirect=on&utm\\_term=.156559231fe0](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/pakistans-army-strips-ex-spy-chief-of-pension-over-book/2019/02/22/70211d54-36a4-11e9-8375-e3dcf6b68558_story.html?noredirect=on&utm_term=.156559231fe0)



with rogue elements have continued ever since. Twice under American pressure there were major purges of ISI's rank and file. The CIA was clearly at odds with our declared objective to help the Mujahedeen." (136)

When it comes to speaking truth to power, the current ISI, writes Durrani, "can claim to be better than the rest. The CIA and the others in the West may have more resources and superior technology, but quite often they succumbed to political pressure and adjusted their assessments accordingly." He goes on to say that during the runup to the Iraq War, "the CIA and its affiliates counterfeited the required evidence." (138) A strong opinion, not documented.

From a foreign policy point of view, Durrani suggests the United States doesn't understand Pakistan's position or is just consumed by imperial hubris when insisting on

greater action against Afghanistan and less contact with Iran. Durrani points out that Pakistan must live with both countries long after Americans go home. Then he emphasizes that US interventions in the Middle East have not brought peace, while each has brought death. By way of explanation, he posits that "no one has ever denied that. . . the State Department, the Pentagon, and the CIA more or less acted independently of the Presidency" and thus the turmoil caused by the United States was an "unintended consequence" rather than a well-conceived policy. (218)

*Pakistan Adrift* is a memoir and is not sourced. Nevertheless, it conveys the forthright views of a seasoned and respected observer. They may conflict with US judgments in some areas, and for that reason alone, they are worth close attention. General Durrani has provided a useful and valuable contribution on Pakistan's political history and its view of American foreign policy in the Middle East.



**Hayden Peake** has served in the CIA's Directorates of Operations and Science and Technology. He has been compiling and writing reviews for the "Intelligence Officer's Bookshelf" since December 2002.